

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

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Summer 1997 Volume 67 Number 3



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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FRONT COVER: Intermediate phase juvenile Pomarine Jaeger at Saylorville Reservoir, Polk County, 11 November 1996. Photo by Stephen J. Dinsmore.

INSIDE BACK COVER: Editorial Staff, Subscription/Membership Information, Instructions to Authors, Officers, Board of Directors, Standing Committees.

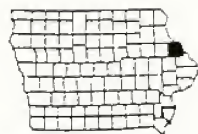
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# NOTES ON AN URBAN NESTING COOPER'S HAWK IN DUBUQUE

JOSEPH E. KAPLER AND DAVID J. CONRAD

The Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), once an endangered species in Iowa, has recently been found nesting throughout the state (Conrads 1997a). A habitat analysis of 33 Cooper's Hawk nests discovered in the late 1980s found each nest to be located in heavily wooded upland areas within oak-hickory communities (Conrads 1997b). However, between 1989 and 1995, Cooper's Hawks were found nesting on the Loras College campus in a unique urban setting. Though Cooper's Hawks have nested in urban areas in other parts of its range (Stahlecker and Beach 1979, Palmer 1988, Rosenfield et al. 1996), this paper describes for the first time the nesting behavior, chronology, and habitat of Cooper's Hawks nesting in an urban area in Iowa.



## NESTING OBSERVATIONS AND CHRONOLOGY

In early March 1990, a staff member at Loras College notified the Biology Department that a pair of hawks, later identified as Cooper's Hawks, had nested on the campus in 1989. The staff member was concerned that construction about to begin near the nest site would disturb the hawks. The nest was in a large white oak (*Quercus alba*) in an area of the campus known as "Keane Oaks". These oaks are a remnant of the upland hardwoods formerly found on the hills in the Dubuque area.

The Loras College campus is somewhat centrally located in the city of Dubuque (population 64,000). The campus is situated on a brow of hills overlooking the Mississippi River valley. The downtown area and the river are east of the campus, and the areas to the north, west, and south are primarily residential. The Loras College campus covers about 24 hectares; the Keane Oaks area is approximately 2 hectares. The shortest distance from the campus to the edge of the city is about 2.4 km to the north. Scattered throughout Dubuque are wooded areas on hillsides, ravines, and ridges where it is not practical to place buildings; therefore, this site is not the only area available to Cooper's Hawks for nesting.

On 15 March 1990, construction began on new student apartments on the north side of the 1989 nesting area which resulted in the removal of a number of trees, including the 1989 nest tree. During the first week of April, a new nest similar to the 1989 nest was discovered in another white oak tree located approximately in the center of the remaining trees in Keane Oaks. A Cooper's Hawk came to the new nest when it was first sighted, confirming its use. It was presumed that this nest was occupied by the same pair of hawks that nested the year before in the tree that was removed. It appeared that incubation was in progress by the last week of April. The female hawk was observed on the nest each day, with just the top of the head and the tail visible from the ground.

The first indication of hatching occurred on 1 June when the female was observed standing on the edge of the nest peering intently into the nest rather than sitting on the nest in the incubation position. Confirmation of hatching occurred on 3 June when movement of downy chicks could be seen just above the edge of the nest. It was eventually determined that three chicks were in the nest.



The chicks grew rapidly during June, and by the last week of June they began to move out of the nest to adjacent branches and were occasionally seen flapping their wings while remaining perched. On 26 June, the three young were out of the nest. Two of them were back in the nest on the next day, but in a few days they were no longer seen on the nest. The three immature hawks remained near the nest tree but were seen less frequently as the days passed. In mid-August, one of the immature hawks was observed trying to catch a fully grown cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), but was unsuccessful. The last reported sighting of Cooper's Hawks in Keane Oaks in 1990 was in late November.

During the time the hawks were nesting in Keane Oaks, a pair of American Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) also nested in a white oak tree about 59 meters from the hawk nest tree. The hawks appeared to tolerate the presence of the nesting crows. No harassment by either the crows or the hawks was observed during this time. Both the hawks and crows were successful in producing fledglings.

In early July after the young hawks had left the nest, a squabbling sound was heard in the tree tops near the nest tree. Close approach revealed the two adult Cooper's Hawks harassing a Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*). After a few minutes the owl flew away with the two hawks in pursuit, but the hawks quickly returned. This was the only time a Great Horned Owl was observed in this area.

The removal of trees, construction of new buildings, and the presence of students caused a considerable change in the Keane Oaks area. The rebuilding of a nest after the 1989 nest tree was removed and the tolerance of construction activity during the spring and summer of 1990 was a good indication of the hawk's tolerance of human disturbance.

Cooper's Hawks were seen in Dubuque several times during the winter of 1990-91, but it was not possible to determine if they were immature or adult birds. On 5 March 1991, an adult Cooper's Hawk was seen at the 1990 nest tree. On 19 March, a pair of Cooper's Hawks was observed building a nest in a white pine (*Pinus strobus*) about 70 meters from the 1990 nest tree. Presumably this was the same pair of Cooper's Hawks that nested in this area in 1990. The nest tree was about 45 feet in height, and the nest was built at a whorl of branches about nine feet from the top. The nest was fairly well concealed and difficult for a casual observer to notice. The 1991 nest tree was in the same general area as the 1990 tree, but closer to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

It was not possible to determine from the ground when egg-laying commenced, but incubating appeared to begin in the third week of April. On 30 May, the behavior of the hawks seemed to indicate that the eggs had hatched. On 1 June, a hawk made three passes at Kapler as he approached the nest tree. The hawk dived to within 8 to 10 feet before pulling away. The hawks were now more defensive of the nest site than they were before hatching.

From a nearby tree on 2 June, three or four chicks could be seen on the nest. A few days later, it was determined that the nest contained five nestlings. The adult hawks were frequently seen at the nest with captured prey, pulling off bits and presenting the pieces to the chicks. The nestlings grew rapidly, and by mid-June, feathers were developing. The young could be seen moving about on the nest, standing up, and stretching and flapping their wings.

About a week before the young left the nest, the adult hawks were seen bringing captured prey to the nest, but they would no longer feed the young. The young fed themselves, holding the prey in their feet and tearing off bits of flesh. Each day the young became more active, moving about on the branches near the nest, hopping or

taking short flights from one branch to another. On 26 June, all five had left the nest and nest tree, but were frequently seen in other trees or flying about the area. On 6 July, one of the immature hawks was seen trying to catch a gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) on the ground, but was unsuccessful. The young hawks were seen less frequently as the summer progressed and appeared to be dispersed by mid-August.

In 1992 the hawks were first observed on 16 April building a nest near the top of a red oak (*Quercus rubra*) about 50-55 feet above the ground. The nest was nearly complete and had probably been started several days earlier. On 18 April, a hawk was seen on the nest, probably egg laying. At this time, a crow was also seen on its nest in a white oak tree 38 meters from the hawk nest tree. As in 1990, the hawks and the crows seemed to ignore each other, and both nests successfully produced fledglings.

Throughout the rest of April and into May the hawks were observed incubating. The eggs hatched during the last week of May, probably about 27 May, judging from the behavior of the female at the nest. On 4 June, hawk chicks were seen moving on the nest, but could not be counted.

Five nestlings were seen on the nest on 16 June. The nest did not seem large enough for this many nestlings. On 19 June one partly decomposed nestling was found dead at the base of the tree. The chick may have fallen out of the nest on 16 or 17 June. Only two chicks could be seen remaining on the nest. The other two chicks were not seen. The adult hawk was greatly agitated by human presence at the nest tree. One week later the two immature hawks were still on the nest. On 30 June, only one was on the nest, the other had fledged. The immature hawks were no longer seen on the nest by 1 July.

In 1993 through 1995, the hawks continued to nest in the same area on campus, producing two, three, and four young, respectively, during those years. The chronology of events was similar to that of previous years. Nest building occurred in late March and early April, incubation began during the last two weeks of April, and hatching occurred around the end of May. Fledging was completed by the end of June. During this six-year period, 22 eggs hatched and 19 fledglings were produced (3.2 fledglings/nest). Three nestlings were lost from the 1992 nest.

From 1990 through 1993, the hawks nested in trees where there was no undergrowth and the grass was mowed during the growing season. In 1994 and 1995, the hawks nested in a large white oak that was in an area where there was still natural understory growth (weeds, shrubs, vines, and small trees). This area was about one-fourth of the Keane Oaks area of the campus. In 1995, the hawks built their nest on top of what remained of the 1994 nest. This was the only time this occurred in the six years of nesting.

In June 1995, a bulldozer was used to clear the undergrowth from this area while the young were still on the nest. Despite this major disturbance, the hawks did not abandon the nest and four fledglings were produced. This cleared area was then seeded to grass and mowed thereafter. There was no Cooper's Hawk nest in 1996, nor was there any sign of a nest by mid-April 1997. Adult Cooper's Hawks have been seen in this area since the clearing of the remaining undergrowth, but presumably this was too much of an alteration of the habitat for Cooper's Hawks to resume nesting.

## NESTING HABITAT

Dubuque, being situated on the banks of the Mississippi River, has a hilly terrain. The topography includes areas on the floodplain of the river to elevations 300 feet above the floodplain. In suburban Wisconsin, a radio-tagged breeding male Cooper's



Hawk was monitored from 6 June to 26 August (Murphy et al. 1988). During that time, the hawk covered a home range of 2.8 by 4.3 km. Using this range as a basis, the habitats within a two-kilometer radius of the nesting sites on the Loras College campus was analyzed with the use of aerial photos obtained from the City Engineer's office. These photos (one inch = 200 feet) were taken on 3 May 1980. There has been growth of the city since 1980, but most has occurred beyond the two-kilometer radius of this study. The areas within this radius are much the same as they were in 1980. Six different habitat/land-use types were identified (Table 1).

Table 1. Habitat types within a two-km radius of the 1990-95 Cooper's Hawk nesting sites.

Habitat Type	Proportion	Hectares
Residential	0.554	696
Open	0.124	156
Institutional	0.101	127
Business	0.100	126
Wooded	0.067	84
Industrial	0.054	68

The residential areas consist mainly of single family units. Trees along the streets and on the properties are abundant in these areas. The open areas include golf courses, open fields (non-cultivated), and public parks. Varying numbers of scattered trees are found throughout these open areas. The institutional areas include four college campuses, high schools, elementary schools, and medical complexes. Wooded habitats of varying area are found throughout the residential and institutional areas on ridges, hillsides, and ravines. There are no buildings in the wooded areas. The business and industrial areas are on the lower elevations closest to the river. The amount of trees in these two areas is much less than in all the other areas.

The wooded areas and all the trees in the residential, institutional, and open areas constitute the urban forest that enables Cooper's Hawks to survive in an urban environment. Competent observers in Dubuque reported seeing Cooper's Hawks capturing various prey species including a Rock Dove (*Columba livia*), House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), an American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), a Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), and a Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*).

## DISCUSSION

The pair of Cooper's Hawks nesting on the Loras College campus have chosen a very different habitat than those that nest in rural Iowa. The most striking feature at the nest site is the lack of natural understory growth around four of the five nest trees. Rural sites have heavy understory cover (65%,  $n=28$ ) (Conrads 1997b), yet four of the five Loras College nest trees are on a mowed hillside. The greatest similarity the nest site has with rural sites is the northern directional exposure of the hillside.

Very little of the surrounding habitat was strictly woodland. In rural Iowa nests, nearly 66% ( $n=33$ ) of the 200 ha area centered on the nest tree was forested. In suburban Wisconsin, the home range of a nesting pair was 32.7% forested (10.1% pine plantation, 19.3% oak-pine woods, 3.3% wooded riparian) (Murphy et al. 1988).

Cooper's Hawks have been reported nesting in urban areas in other parts of its range (Palmer 1988). A radio-tagged male Cooper's Hawk breeding in Plover,

Wisconsin (population 5,500) was found to avoid wooded residential, residential/business, and open areas, while preferring oak-pine woods and shrub savannah habitats (Murphy et al. 1988). A nest in Rangely, Colorado (population 2,500) had several duplex apartments, an active softball field, an automotive shop, and a paved road used by heavy equipment all located within 150 m. The nest produced four fledglings (Stahlecker and Beach 1979).

Cooper's Hawks breeding in Stevens Point, Wisconsin and its suburbs (population about 36,000) had high nest density, nesting success, and repeated nest reoccupancy (Rosenfield et al. 1996). The 3.2 fledglings/nest reported here is less than the 4.0 bandable young/nest found in urban Wisconsin (Rosenfield et al. 1996), but greater than the 2.8 birds/nest reported from successful rural Iowa nests (Conrads 1997b).

As urban nesting becomes more common, it will become tempting for people to linger near nest sites which may possibly hinder nesting success due to perceived harassment from humans by the hawks. Two failed nesting attempts in the late 1980s were probably due to the prolonged presence of humans at the nest site who ignored the warning calls of a nesting Cooper's Hawk (Conrads 1997b). A few days later each nest was found deserted. Both instances occurred just prior to or early on in the incubation period.

## SUMMARY

It appears that Cooper's Hawks in the Midwest are becoming much more tolerant of human landscapes than in the past and that we may be finding them more commonly in suburban and urban Iowa. Recent studies indicate that urban nesting hawks are quite successful and productive compared to more rural nesting birds. Conscientious human behavior and habitat management should enable Cooper's Hawks to successfully breed throughout Iowa in other park-like urban settings, as well as heavily wooded rural areas, in the future.

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## MEET AN IOWA BIRDER--CAROL THOMPSON

JAMES P. SANDROCK

Now that Carol Thompson has completed her term as President of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and so assumes the status of *proconsul*, it seems fitting to proffer a précis of her contributions to the organization and to reveal to its members her considerable birding skills and experiences; in addition, a brief look at her professional and personal accomplishments would, I think, not be out of place.

All of us associated in any way with Carol are familiar with her boundless energy and drive in whatever she does. A professional geologist, Carol has been an asset to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Geological Survey Bureau and to the profession in general for almost two decades. Nationally recognized for her work and research on groundwater problems, she generously shares her expertise with communities and individuals concerned with the supply, quality, and conservation of groundwater.

Carol received both the Bachelor of Science and the Master of Science degrees in Geology from the University of Illinois-Chicago; in 1993, she earned the Doctor of Philosophy degree from The University of Iowa; her dissertation was a study of "The Hydrogeology of Iowa Fens." Carol completed the course work, research, examinations, and dissertation while working full-time as well as continuing her many birding interests, of which more later. The commitment, self-discipline, sacrifices, and plain hard work necessary to complete successfully the rigorous requirements of the Ph.D. degree under these circumstances seem incomprehensible to those of us who are inclined to take life a bit easier.

Since her arrival in Iowa City, Carol has assiduously carried on her geologic field work, has written--alone or in collaboration--more than 35 scientific articles, has received 11 grants to study groundwater (e.g., Walnut Creek Watershed Restoration and Water Quality Monitoring Project: Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Jasper County, Iowa); has served on many local and state committees (e.g., the Advisory Committee for Iowa City Zoning and Planning; the Advisory Panel of the State Wetlands Working Group); has taught and lectured on well protection and certification and on hydrogeology and hazardous wastes; has, in her role as Adjunct Professor of Geology at The University of Iowa, directed the projects of many graduate students; is a member of many organizations (e.g., Iowa Academy of Science [Director, 1995-1997]; Geological Society of Iowa [President, 1995]; Iowa Natural History Association [President, 1996-1997]; Iowa Ornithologists' Union [President, 1995-1997]; and has done consulting work in wetlands, hydrochemistry, and geomorphology.

Carol became interested in birds and birding while on a trip to Canada in 1978. A resident of Chicago at that time, she was able to bird along the shores of Lake Michigan for pleasure and to gain birding experience and knowledge. When she arrived in Iowa City in 1985, Carol contacted the Iowa City Bird Club through which she met Mike Newlon whose enthusiasm for and expertise in birding influenced her greatly.

Although her birding interests and skills were furthered in Iowa and although most of her birding is done within the state, Carol has also birded many of the storied 'Hot Spots' in the 'Lower 48': Maine, Florida, the Dry Tortugas, Pt. Pelee, Northern Minnesota, the Rio Grande Valley and Big Bend National Park in Texas, southeastern Arizona, and the Pacific Northwest; outside the United States, she has birded in



Ireland, Scotland, and Costa Rica. Plans are now being made to bird Trinidad/Tobago, Belize, and other Caribbean sites.

Carol's time in the field has produced not only a lifelist of well over 600 North American species but also many photographs of the species that she has seen.

But her interest in and commitment to birds and birding extend far beyond field observation. For eight years, Carol was publisher, editor, chief writer, graphic artist, typesetter, business manager, and circulation director (not, however, copy reader) of *The Eastern Iowa Birdwatch*, a newsletter sponsored by the Iowa City Bird Club; she has participated regularly in the annual Breeding Bird Survey and in the Christmas Bird Count in Iowa City (and on occasion in Van Buren County); she has designed, constructed, and made available striking exhibits for I.O.U., which have been seen throughout the state; and she has successfully completed the *cursus honorum* in the I.O.U., having this year completed two years as president.



*Carol Thompson at combined, I.O.U., N.O.U., and S.D.O.U. meeting,  
Sioux City, May 1997.*

Carol's greatest accomplishment, in my opinion, is her work on the recently published *The Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas*. With her co-authors, Laura Jackson, Jim Dinsmore, and five others, Carol's vision, commitment, organizational skills, endurance, patience, perspicacity, and perseverance brought this publication to light. For ten years, she labored in organizing field observers, receiving reports, collecting and analyzing data, writing, editing, producing graphics, meeting with contributors and publisher, and in the myriad tasks demanded by such an enterprise. The result is an important book which makes a significant contribution to the scientific study of

birds, not only for Iowa but for American birds as well. That the book is both informative and attractive is a rare accomplishment in any discipline. For this we can thank Carol, Laura, and Jim.

Those of us who have birded with Carol--for a few hours or on an extended trip--know that she researches and plans these expeditions with painstaking care. Once on the road, Carol drives herself--and those with her--to bird long and hard, all the while commenting on the visible geological formations and anomalies. An enthusiastic camper, Carol loves the outdoors and nature (and back roads) where she demonstrates her considerable knowledge of them all.

In addition to these many activities, Carol is the mother of son John, a recent graduate of The University of Iowa, a zealous bicyclist, does much of her own home repair, attends concerts and dramas, reads mysteries, is an avid 'Trekkie', cheers for Notre Dame, the Chicago Bulls, Bears, and Cubs, women's athletics, and--Anything Irish.

One wants to--and some do--tell her that she is 'spreading herself too thin'--that she should 'slow down'--'take it easy'--'smell the roses'--'eat more vegetables'--but if she did those things, if she gave up chocolate, and if she always had the right lens on the right camera at the right time, she wouldn't be Carol!

The birding community of Iowa is fortunate to have her in its midst--and on its side.

1634 Morningside Drive, Iowa City, IA 52245

## FIFTY YEARS AGO IN IOWA BIRD LIFE

Much of the summer 1947 issue of *Iowa Bird Life* was devoted to birds outside of Iowa. The lead article featured short accounts of summer vacation birding by several Iowa birders. It is interesting to note that some places that are still popular as vacation spots--Yellowstone National Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, the Grand Tetons, and the Great Smoky Mountains--were mentioned in these writeups. Other more birdy areas visited by Iowans in 1947 included the Northern Gannet colony on Bonaventure Island off of Quebec and Bear River Refuge in Utah. It is clear from the writeups that travel was much slower in those pre-interstate highway years but many of the birds seen were ones that current birders still seek. An article by Mrs. W. C. DeLong discussing the variety of warblers and other fall migrants she saw in Clarion is nicely illustrated with black and white drawings by E. W. Steffen. A book review of the third edition of Roger Tory Peterson's *A Field Guide to the Birds* elicited some nostalgia from this writer since that was the book I used to learn to identify birds. In 1947 the organization held only one formal meeting per year, in spring. In September 1947, Fred Pierce and his wife decided thought that it would be fun to have an informal fall get-together and, with only a few days notice, invited a number of friends to their home. The message spread quickly to many others and on 21 September, 57 I.O.U. members and friends gathered at the Pierce home in Winthrop to talk about birds. In a short article about this event, Editor Pierce suggested that perhaps a fall meeting was needed. This modest but successful gathering seems to be the beginning of what eventually evolved into our now annual fall meetings of the organization.--ed.



# REPORT OF THE RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 1996

THOMAS H. KENT

The Records Committee reviewed 76 records from 1996. Of these, 58 were accepted and 18 were not. Neotropical Cormorant was added to the state list. In addition two records from previous years were evaluated

Committee members for 1996 with years in which their terms expire were: Raymond L. Cummins (1997), Francis L. Moore (1998), Ann M. Johnson (1999), W. Ross Silcock (2000), Chris Edwards (2001), James L. Fuller (2002), and Thomas H. Kent (secretary, appointed by the committee). Matthew C. Kenne was nominated to fill a regular term beginning in 1997.

All committee business was transacted by mail. In addition to reviewing all records of casual and accidental species, the committee reviewed more documentations of unusually early or late or out-of-season birds than in past years.

The four-digit number (year and sequence number) assigned to each record reviewed by the Records Committee is included for future reference. For old records not previously reviewed, the year is the year of first review and the sequence number is two letters. Records are classified as follows: A = Accepted (-S = specimen, -P = photograph, -R = recording, -D = documentation, -O = origin uncertain) and NA = Not Accepted. In order to be Accepted, a record must receive 7 votes on the initial review or 6 votes on a subsequent review. The subcategories A-S, A-P, and A-R indicate that physical evidence supports the identification, and records are subclassified based on a majority vote. References to IBL are the page of the Field Reports in Iowa Bird Life where the record is cited. P- numbers refer to the IOU Photo File entry number. Published notes and previous citations may contain more details. An \* indicates a previously uncited documentation.

## 1996 RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Red-throated Loon:** 19 Apr south of Sioux Center in Sioux Co. (96-09, IBL 66:100, Van Dyk 1997); 27 Nov at Red Rock Res. in Marion Co. (96-39, IBL 67:19).

**Pacific Loon:** 11 Oct at Rathbun Res. (96-19, IBL 67:19); 3, 7, and 18 Nov at Red Rock Res. (96:42, IBL 67:19); and 5 Nov at Saylorville Res. (96-41, IBL 67:19).

**Brown Pelican:** 4 Nov at Lock and Dam 18 in Des Moines Co. (96-43, IBL 67:19, Fuller 1997, Kleen 1997).

**Neotropical Cormorant:** 4 May at Little River R.A. in Decatur Co. (96-10, P-0505, IBL 66:100).

**White-faced Ibis:** 5 to 13 May at Snake Creek M. in Greene Co. (96-28, P-0508, IBL 66:101); 20 May at Blue L. in Monona Co. (96-11, IBL 66:101); 25 May at Errington M. in Polk Co. (96-12, IBL 66:101); 3 June at DU Marsh in Clay Co. (96-32, IBL 66:131); and 27 Jun at Sheldon Basin in Fremont Co. (96-33, IBL 66:131).

**Brant:** 29 Nov at Swan L. in Carroll Co. (96-69, \*Russ Behrens).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** 31 May south of Liscomb in Marshall Co. (96-13, IBL 66:102).

**Snowy Plover:** 3 May at Saylorville Res. (96-14, P-0504, IBL 66:102, Dinsmore 1997a).

**Black-necked Stilt:** 18 and 19 May south of Ainsworth in Washington Co. (96-15, P-0501, IBL 66:103, Proescholdt 1997).

**Whimbrel:** 17 May at Riverton A. in Fremont Co. (96-29, IBL 66:103).

**Red Knot:** 25 Aug at Union Slough N.W.R. in Kossuth Co. (96:48, IBL 67:21, Kenne 1997).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** 29 Mar at Cone M. in Louisa Co. (96-66, IBL 66:103).

**Ruff:** 10 May south of Grimes in Polk Co. (96-17, IBL 66:103, Engebretsen 1997).

**Red Phalarope:** 6 Sep at Union Slough N.W.R. in Kossuth Co. (96-50, IBL 67:22); 13 and 14 Oct at Saylorville Res. (96-51, P-0521, IBL 67:22); and 3 Nov at Spirit L. in Dickinson Co. (96-52, P-0518, IBL 67:22).

**Jaeger species:** 17 Nov at Spirit L. in Dickinson Co. (96-53, IBL 67:22).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** 10 to 22 Nov at Saylorville Res. in Polk Co. (96-54, P-0526, *IBL* 67:22, Dinsmore 1997b) and 16 to 30 Nov at Red Rock Res. (96-55, *IBL* 67:22, Dinsmore 1997b). At least 3 birds were present at each site and may have been the same birds.

**Laughing Gull:** 17 Aug at Runnells A. and 5 Sep at Red Rock Res. in Marion Co. (96-56, P-0525, *IBL* 67:22).

**Little Gull:** a juv. from 21 to 22 Apr at Black Hawk L. in Sac Co. (96-18, *IBL* 66:104).

**Black-headed Gull:** an ad. in alt. plumage from 23 Jun to 20 Jul at Jemmerson Sl. in Dickinson Co. (96-34, P-0515, *IBL* 66:133).

**Mew Gull:** an ad. on 29 Nov at Saylorville Res. (96-58, *IBL* 67:22, Dinsmore 1997c).

**California Gull:** 1 molting to 2nd winter plumage on 6 Sep at Spirit L. in Dickinson Co. (96-59, *IBL* 67:22).

**Iceland Gull:** 1 in 1st winter (basic) plumage on 5 Jan at Davenport in Scott Co. (96-01, *IBL* 66:57).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** 1 in 1st winter (basic) plumage on 27 Nov at Red Rock Res. in Marion Co. (96-61, *IBL* 67:22).

**Sabine's Gull:** 1 juv. on 2 Oct at Spirit L. in Dickinson Co. (96-62, P-0518, *IBL* 67:23); 1 juv. on 6 Oct at Black Hawk L. in Sac Co. 96-63, *IBL* 67:23; and 1 ad. on 24 Oct at Red Rock Res. (96-64, *IBL* 67:23).

**Great Gray Owl:** 11 to 26 Feb at Big M. in Butler Co. (96-02, P-0480, *IBL* 66(2) cover, *IBL* 66:57); 17 Feb east of Wellsburg in Grundy Co. (road-kill, 96-37, *IBL* 66:57); 1 Mar at Des Moines in Polk Co. (96-26, Iowa State Univ. specimen #2643, P-0503, *IBL* 66:107); and 10 Mar south of Lucas in Fayette Co. (96-38, P-0517, *IBL* 66:104).

**Rufous Hummingbird:** 21 to 23 Aug at Spirit L. in Dickinson Co. (96-65, P-0520, *IBL* 67:23).

**Pinyon Jay:** 30 Oct 1996 to 22 Mar 1997 north of Boone in Boone Co. (96-66, P-0529, P-0543, *IBL* 67:23, Crim and Crim 1997).

**Clark's Nutcracker:** 20 Dec near Pony Creek P. in Mills Co. (96-71, P-0532, *IBL* 67:61, *IBL* 67(2) cover).

**Mountain Bluebird:** 12 Mar at Hidden Bridge W.A. in Lyon Co. (96-22, *IBL* 66:105).

**Cape May Warbler:** 15 Dec at Indianola in Warren Co. (96-72, P-0540, *IBL* 67:62).

**Palm Warbler:** 9 Dec near Boone in Boone Co. (96-73, *IBL* 67:62).

**Western Tanager:** 23 May east of Spirit L. in Dickinson Co. (96-23, *IBL* 66:107).

**Lazuli Bunting:** 16 May at Shenandoah in Page Co. (96-31, *IBL* 66:107), and 1 and 2 Jun at Little Sioux W.A. in Clay Co. (96-35, *IBL* 66:136).

**Lark Sparrow:** 20 Dec north of Newell in Buena Vista Co. (96-74, \*Ed Thelen, *IBL* 67:62).

**Savannah Sparrow:** 29 Dec at Trautman Res. in Marshall Co. (96-75, *IBL* 67:62).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** 23 Jun at Cedar Rapids in Linn Co. (96-36, *IBL* 66:136).

**Pine Grosbeak:** 22 Dec at Saylorville Res. in Polk Co. (96-76, *IBL* 67:55, 56).

**Hoary Redpoll:** 3 to 12 Feb near Norwalk in Warren Co. (96-04, P-0496, *IBL* 66:60); 4 Feb north of Iowa City in Johnson Co. (96-06, *IBL* 66:60), and 28 Feb at Ames in Story Co. (96-08, *IBL* 66:60).

## 1996 RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

**Great Cormorant:** A brief view was not enough to identify an extremely unlikely vagrant (96-44).

**Anhinga:** A bird circling high overhead (96-45, *IBL* 67:19) appeared to be this species. Three records of soaring birds in Minnesota from the 1980s that had been accepted as Anhingas were later rejected when soaring Double-crested Cormorants were observed to fan their tails, hold their necks extended, and to appear small-headed and long-tailed (Eckert 1989).

**Gyrfalcon:** A brief view and differing opinions was not enough to be conclusive on this difficult-to-identify species (96-46, *IBL* 67:21).

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** 6 birds flushed from a grassy area in late summer at a location where this species has not been reported to be nesting were not accepted on a split vote (96-47, *IBL* 67:21).

**Laughing Gull:** Committee members were not able to identify a gull conclusively from a photograph alone (96-30, P-0513, *IBL* 66:104).

**Black-headed Gull:** A brief view of a gull flying away was not considered conclusive (96-57, *IBL* 67:22).

**California Gull:** The description of a gull was not considered conclusive (96-60, *IBL* 67:22).

**Iceland Gull:** Two reports were not accepted (96-19, *IBL* 66:104 and 96-70, *IBL* 67:60). These records may be correct, but, for this species, the committee tends to be conservative and require good views and complete description.

**Fish Crow:** Two reports were not accepted (96-20, *IBL* 66:105 and 96-21, *IBL* 66:105). One was reported by only one of several persons present, and the other was a very brief encounter. The committee would like to have recordings, a specimen, or repeated encounters at one location in order to confirm this species' presence in Iowa.



- Bridled Titmouse:** A drawing of a bird at a feeder depicted this species (96-03, *IBL* 66:57). Although the bird was said to be present for two weeks, it was not seen by active birders and the information about it was secondhand. This species is not a vagrant north of its range, which in the United States is limited to Arizona and New Mexico. The committee would like information on bird traffic from Mexico.
- Black-headed Grosbeak:** Two reports of females (96-24, 96-25, *IBL* 66:107) were not accepted. Female grosbeaks are extremely hard to identify.
- Le Conte's Sparrow:** A winter report was plausible (96-27, *IBL* 66:58), but not accepted on a split vote.
- Smith's Longspur:** Both the date and plumage relative to the date were inconsistent with this species (96-67, *IBL* 67:26).
- Brewer's Blackbird:** An early fall report (96-68, *IBL* 67:26) of a species that is difficult to identify was not convincing to all members of the committee.
- Hoary Redpoll:** Two reports were likely correct (96-05, 96-07, *IBL* 66:60) but lacked essential details present in the accepted reports.

## OLD RECORDS REVIEWED FOR FIRST TIME

- Black-necked Stilt:** 1 bird north of Round L. in Harrison Co. was photographed by \*Joel Jorgensen on 25 May 1991 (96-AA, P-0524). Although the image is small, the bird is easily identified.
- Skua species:** A photograph from 1995 (96-AB) remains under review.

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# FIELD REPORTS--SPRING 1997

THOMAS H. KENT

## WEATHER

March was mild, averaging slightly warmer and dryer than normal. April was definitely colder and overall slightly drier than normal. April was the third snowiest on record with heavy snow from the 9th to 12th. The heaviest snow, up to 22 inches, was in extreme southern Iowa on the 10th. Severe thunderstorms and high winds accompanied a low-pressure system on the 5th and 6th. May was one of the coldest on record. North winds prevailed most of the month and temperatures in the 70s were unusual.



## GENERAL TRENDS

This spring was one of the most interesting since I have been writing the Field Reports (since 1979). Although it seemed like spring would never arrive and birding was often dull, the unusual weather patterns were associated with several rarities and many late arrivals and departures, and, surprisingly, some early ones too.

The early warming trend in March provided good waterfowl concentrations. Steve Dinsmore observed over 20 species on many days. The number of reports of Ross's Geese continues to increase, and they are widespread and sometimes linger. I was surprised to see 25 huddled together in the wind near the shore of South Twin Lake on 8 May. There were many reports of Greater White-fronted Geese, suggesting that observers were impressed with the numbers and widespread distribution. More than usual numbers of Cinnamon Teal were seen, but other rare ducks, except for an Oldsquaw, were absent.

Perhaps the most spectacular event of the season was the mid-April snow storm. During and after this storm, Iowa's first and second White-winged Doves appeared, and several Chestnut-collared Longspurs were found along roads. Although there were a few early passerine records, most of the usual early passerines were not to be found in late April.

Early May was like late April, but eventually the migrants had to show up in spite of the northerly winds and lack of stalled fronts. The best fallouts were in northwestern Iowa during the last two weeks of May. Shorebirds were average at best and without rarities. The sparrow migration was late and particularly evident in western Iowa with many Clay-colored and Harris's sparrows and large flocks of Chipping Sparrows.

## UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

Accidental species reported included Barnacle Goose, White-winged Dove, Great Gray Owl, Vermilion Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Lazuli Bunting, and Chestnut-collared Longspur. The goose was considered an escape. The White-winged Doves are the first and the Black-throated Gray Warbler is



a second state record. The magpies may have nested for the second time in Iowa. The April snow storm and birders looking for them were major factors in finding the Chestnut-collared Longspurs. Lazuli Bunting records have increased in the last three years, and this year one was found as far east as Mason City.

Casual species reported included Red-throated and Pacific loons, Black-necked Stilt, Iceland Gull, and Western Tanager. Some of the rare regular species included Red-necked Grebe, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Mute Swan, Cinnamon Teal, Mississippi Kite, Northern Goshawk, Golden Eagle, Yellow Rail, Piping Plover, Western Sandpiper, Least Tern, Snowy Owl, Townsend's Solitaire, Prairie Warbler, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, and Red Crossbill. Two hybrid warblers were found--the relatively common Brewster's (Blue-winged x Golden-winged) and the exceedingly rare Sutton's (Yellow-throated x Northern Parula).

Usually I leave out rare species for which there are no reports and widespread common species, most of which are also not reported. This year I have noted some species that were not reported although the lack of reports does not necessarily mean that no birds were present.

## SPECIES DATA

\* = documented; [] = record date

**Red-throated Loon:** 1 in basic plumage was at Pleasant Creek L. from 13 Apr to at least 10 May (\*JLF, \*CE, MPr-details, THK-photo, RIA-photo)[2nd earliest; record latest]. This is only the sixth spring record.

**Pacific Loon:** 1 imm. was at West Okoboji from 15 Apr to 26 May (\*ETH-photo, \*LAS, \*DCH)[record earliest and latest]. This is only the second spring record.

**Common Loon:** First: 24 Mar at Big Creek L. (SJD). Last: 21 May at Rice L. in Worth Co. (THK). High count: 18 on 19 Apr at West Okoboji (ETH). There were March sightings at 3 other locations.

**Horned Grebe:** First: 2 on 12 Mar at L. Manawa (BKP/LJP). Last: 31 May in Dickinson Co. (LAS)[3rd latest]. High count: 15 on 5 Apr at Rathbun Res. (RLC).

**Red-necked Grebe:** All: 2 on 27 Apr at West Okoboji (ETH) and 2 on 6 to 8 May west of Hubbard in Hardin Co. (MPr, JLF, THK).

**Eared Grebe:** First: 6 Apr at Green Is. (PCP). From 1 to 5 were reported at 10 other locations across the state.

**Western Grebe:** All: 2 on 4, 6 May at Amana L. (JLF, THK) and 1 on 12 May at Black Hawk L. (ETH).

**American White Pelican:** First: 19 on 8 Mar at Heron Bend in Lee Co. (SJD). This species is now regular in all areas of the state with some remaining through the end of the period.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** First: 26 Mar at McCord Pond in Guthrie Co. (SJD, MPr). High count: 190 on 5 May at Hallett's Quarry in Story Co. (HZ).

**American Bittern:** First: on 14 Apr at Ames (HZ) and near Luther in Boone Co. (Steve Fairbairn fide JJD). From 1 to 2 were reported at 11 locations, which is more than usual.

**Least Bittern:** May reports were from Fremont Co. (AMJ), Deweys Pasture (Steve Fairbairn fide JJD), Harrier M. (Jane Schuster fide JJD), and Spring Run W.A. (Steve Fairbairn fide JJD).

**Great Blue Heron:** 12 active nests were west of Union in Hardin Co. on 6 May (MPr).

**Great Egret:** First: 27 Mar in Tama Co. (MPr). Another March bird was at Hawarden in Sioux Co. on the 28th (JV).

**Snowy Egret:** All: 1 from 17 to 21 May at Smith's Sl. in Clay Co. (Steve Fairbairn fide JJD, THK-photo).

**Cattle Egret:** First: 2 May at Colo Ponds (MPr). From 1 to 5 were reported at 5 other locations, which is less than usual.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** First: 9 Apr at Coralville Res. (JLF). From 1 to 5 were reported at 7 other locations.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** All: 1 on 26 May in Warren Co. (AMJ).

**White-faced Ibis:** In contrast to recent years, none were reported.



*Red-throated Loon at Pleasant Creek Lake, 2 May 1997. Photo by Thomas H. Kent*

**Tundra Swan:** All: 2 on 3 Mar at Riverton A. (SJD), 2 on 4 Mar near Fomey L with Trumpeters (SJD), 1 on 6 Mar in Mills Co. (SJD), and up to 15 on 26, 27 Mar in Cerro Gordo Co. (CJF, RGo).

**Trumpeter Swan:** All: 3 ad. (2 with green Wisconsin neck collars) and 2 imm. on 3 Mar in Fremont Co. (SJD), 1 ad. and 1 imm. (unbanded) on 22 Mar at Big M. (\*MPR, SJD), and 5 on 20 May at Lost Island M. (THK).

**Mute Swan:** All: 1 imm. on 12 Apr at Easter L. in Polk Co. (AB-photo).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** First: 15 on 5 Mar at Barringer Sl. (D. Marske fide LAS). Last: 2 on 25 May at South Twin L. (PE). High count: 1,200 on 16 Mar at Dunbar Sl. (SJD). This species was widely reported from 18 locations, with 9 reports of more than 100.

**Snow Goose:** High count: 30,000 on 31 Mar at Fomey L. (BKP/LJP). This figure is likely misleading—earlier in March many more should be present.

**Ross's Goose:** From 1 to 41 were reported from 6 Mar to 15 May at 22 locations with more than 10 birds at 9 locations. This species has increased dramatically in recent years and is now regular in eastern as well as western Iowa.

**Barnacle Goose:** 1 on 6 Mar at Green Castle R.A. in Marshall Co. was thought to be an escapee because of a clipped hind toe (MPR, Marshalltown *Times-Republican*, 9 Mar 1997-photo). It stayed for about a month.

**Canada Goose:** High count: 8,000 on 7 Mar at Dunbar Sl. (RTh).

**Green-winged Teal:** 6 remained in Dickinson Co. on 31 May (LAS).

**American Black Duck:** The only reports were of 1 on 5 Mar at Swan L. in Carroll Co. (RTh) and 5 on 22 Mar at Big M. (SJD, MPR). Undoubtedly others went unreported.

**Cinnamon Teal:** All: 31 Mar at Swan in Marion Co. (AMJ), 10 Apr at Dunbar Sl. (RTh), 19 Apr at Dugout Creek in Dickinson Co. (ETH, LAS), 19 Apr and 2 May at Big Creek L. (PJW), a pair on 20 Apr at Patterson W.A. in Kossuth Co. (MCK), 24 Apr north of Burlington (JLF), and 4 May at South Twin L. (PE). These 8 reports, all males except for the one pair, are more than usual.

**Northern Shoveler:** 1,500 on 14 Apr at Little Clear L. in Pocahontas Co. (MMB) is an unusually large concentration.

**Gadwall:** High count: 1,225 on 24 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD).

**Canvasback:** High count: 33,000 on 8 Mar on Pool 19 in Lee Co. (SJD).

**Greater Scaup:** Last: a pair on 26 Apr at West Okoboji (LAS). There were 7 reports from March and early April.

**Lesser Scaup:** High count: 20,000 on 29 Mar on Pool 19 (CE).

**Oldsquaw:** 1 was at Pleasant Creek L. from 26 Apr to 2 May (MPR, JLF, THK).

**Scoters:** None were reported.

**Bufflehead:** High count: 92 on 13 Apr at Rathbun Res. (RLC).

**Hooded Merganser:** High count: 36 on 16 Mar in Boone Co. (SJD).

**Ruddy Duck:** High count: 500 on 29 Mar at Black Hawk L. (ETH).

**Turkey Vulture:** First: 2 on 7 Mar in Warren Co. (AB). There were 4 other March reports.

**Osprey:** First: 14 Mar at Black Hawk W.A. (PE-details)[3rd earliest]. Other reports were from mid-April to mid-May.

**Mississippi Kite:** All: 1 from 12 May through the end of the period at Ledges S.P. (PJW, \*LH), 1 on 19 May at Greenwood P. in Des Moines, and 1 on 25 at Olivet Baptist Church in Clive.

**Bald Eagle:** 30 were at L. Manawa in Pottawattamie Co. on 6 Mar (BKP/LJP).

**Northern Harrier:** 2 of 10 seen were feeding on coots on 13 Apr at Union Slough N.W.R. (MCK).

**Cooper's Hawk:** Nests were reported from the following counties: Warren (2 locations, JSi), Dickinson (JJ), and Story (Jane Schuster fide JJD).

**Northern Goshawk:** All: 1 ad. on 13 Mar in Ida Co. (PE) and 1 on 20 and 31 Mar at Waubonsie S.P. (BKP/LJP).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Reports were from the following counties: Benton (CE), Clay (LAS), Dickinson (LAS, ETH), Polk (PJW), Sac (AB, RTh), and Tama (PJW). Three of these counties are in northwestern Iowa—this species is most often found in eastern Iowa. A bird reported from 26 Apr 1996 (*IBL* 66:102) should have been 26 Mar (SJD).



*Snowy Egret at Smiths Slough, 20 May 1997. Photo by Thomas H. Kent*



**Broad-winged Hawk:** First: 17 Apr in Des Moines (PJW). High count: 6 on 19 Apr at Rock Creek P. (MPr). A nest was found at Walnut Woods in Polk Co. on 12 May (JSi). On 29 May, 2 subadults were migrating at Algona (MCK). It is amazing that this common species can cross the state with so few noticed.

**Swainson's Hawk:** First: 2 on 14 Apr in Fremont Co. (BKP/LJP). High count: 5 circling north of Fomey L. on 15 May (THK). One was on a nest at the usual location south of Allendorf in Osceola Co. on 8 May (THK). Other reports were from 8 locations in western and northern Iowa.

**Red-tailed Hawk:** Krider's Hawks were at Fairfield on 30 Mar (DCP) and Spirit L. on 2 May (ETH). A Harlan's Hawk was at Otter Creek M. on 14 Apr (MPr).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Last: 17 May at Broken Kettle Grassland in Plymouth Co. (MCK).

**Golden Eagle:** All: 1 imm. on 12 Mar at Smith W.A. in Kossuth Co. (MCK-details) and 1 imm. on 22 Mar at Big M. (SJD-details).

**Merlin:** All: 5 Mar at Fomey L. (SJD), 20 Mar in Emmet Co. (DHe), and 13 Apr at Dunbar Sl. (RTh, ETH). This is fewer than are usually reported.

**Peregrine Falcon:** All of the 19 reports were from 1 to 19 May.

**Gray Partridge:** Reports were from Allamakee, Dickinson, Franklin, Marshall, Story and Worth counties.

**Yellow Rail:** All: 1 on 9 May south of Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (JLF-details).

**Virginia Rail:** First: 17 Apr at Otter Creek M. (CE). There were 5 other reports.

**Sora:** First: 19 Apr at Engeldinger M. in Polk Co. (PJW).

**Common Moorhen:** All: 2 on 10 May at Pool Sl. in Allamakee Co. (FL) and 1 on 16 May at Forney L. (AMJ).

**Sandhill Crane:** First: 13 Mar at Black Hawk L. (RTh). From 1 to 7 were reported from 12 locations.

**Black-bellied Plover:** First: 3 on 6 May at Coralville Res. (JLF). All others were from mid- to late May.

**American Golden-Plover:** First: 26 Mar east of Glidden in Carroll Co. (SJD, MPr). Last: 20 May in Fremont Co. (BKP/LJP). High count: 450 on 17 May in Palo Alto Co. (Steve Fairbairn fide JJD). Many were reported with low numbers in April and larger flocks in May.

**Semipalmated Plover:** First: 19 Apr at Blue L. (PE). High count: 50 on 11 May at Coralville Res. (THK).

**Piping Plover:** All: up to 4 were at the Power Plant in Woodbury Co. on 17 and 18 May (RLC, MPr, AMJ). None were found at the Power Plant in Pottawattamie Co., perhaps due to machinery activity.

**Killdeer:** On 13 Apr, after the snow storm, 204 were counted on roads in Johnson Co., and most were in pairs (THK). Counts of 64 were reported in Cass Co. on 10 Apr (MAP) and in Warren Co. on 11 Apr (AMJ).

**Black-necked Stilt:** All: 1 at Louisa Refuge in Louisa Co. on 26 Mar (\*AS)[record earliest].

**American Avocet:** First: 12 Apr in Appanoose Co. (RLC) [ties 2nd earliest]. Last: 30 May at Black Hawk W.A. (RTh)[ties 2nd latest]. High count: 19 on 4 May at Runnells A. (JSi). There were reports from 4 other locations.

**Greater Yellowlegs:** First: 26 Mar near Glidden (SJD, MPr) and at Lansing (FL). Last: 23 May at Rock Valley (JV).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** First: 15 Mar in Warren Co. (AB). High count: 200 on 4 May at Cone M (THK).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** First: 26 Apr in Dickinson Co. (ETH).

**Willet:** First: 10 on 26 Apr at Tomahawk M. (PE). Last: 1 on 31 May at Harrier M. (JJD). There were reports from 6 other locations.

**Upland Sandpiper:** Reports were from Davis, Dickinson, Iowa, and Story counties.

**Hudsonian Godwit:** First: 3 on 5 May at Colo Ponds (HZ). High count: 450 on 15 May in Fremont Co. (THK). Last: 3 on 29 May in Dickinson Co. (ETH). This species was common in May this year, especially in western Iowa.

**Marbled Godwit:** Convincing details were given for 1 on 3 May at Dugout Creek (LAS) and 1 on 6 May in Story Co. (MPr). Marbled Godwit is usually an early migrant, so I have to be skeptical of reports of both godwits at the same location in mid- to late May. Hudsonian Godwits in their varied plumages can easily be mistaken for Marbled Godwits unless the birds are flushed.

**Ruddy Turnstone:** First: 10 May at Elk L. in Clay Co. (LAS). Last: 21 May with 5 at Union Slough N.W.R. (MCK, THK) and 10 at Rush L. in Palo Alto Co. (MMB). There were 3 each reported from 3 other locations.

**Sanderling:** First: 5 May at Colo Ponds (HZ). Last: 26 May at Rathbun Res. (RLC). From 1 to 3 were reported at 3 other locations.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** High count: 90 on 18 May in Guthrie Co. (JSi).

**Western Sandpiper:** All: 2 on 23 May at Hawarden in Sioux Co. (JV-details).

**Least Sandpiper:** High count: 1,000 on 11 May at Coralville Res. (THK).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** First: 6 May at Colo Ponds (MPr). High count: 200 on 15 May at Riverton A. (THK).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** All: 9 on 7 Apr at Power Plant in Pottawattamie Co. (BKP/LJP), 3 on 6 May in Story Co. (MPr), 2 on 8 May at Coralville Res. (CE), and 10 on 11 May at Riverton A. (BKP/LJP).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** First: on 21 Mar with 2 at Hawarden (JV) and 4 at Saylorville Res. (SJD). High count: 1,000 on 11 May at Coralville Res. (THK).

**Dunlin:** First: 6 Apr at Green Is. in Jackson Co. (PCP)[2nd earliest]. Last: 9 on 27 May at Five Island L. in Palo Alto Co. (DHe). High count: 200 on 15 May at Riverton A. (THK). Several other large flocks were noted.

**Silt Sandpiper:** First: 6 May at Amana L. (THK). Last and high count: 26 on 23 May at Dugout Creek (ETh).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** None reported.

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** First: 15 on 4 May at Cone M. (THK). Last: 2 on 18 May at Kiowa M. in Sac Co. (MPr).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** First: 9 on 26 Apr at Otter Creek M. (MPr). Last: 1 heard on 11 May at Riverton A. in Fremont Co. (BKP/LJP).

**Common Snipe:** First: 3 on 16 Mar at Cone M. (THK). High count: 300 on 11 Apr at Cone M. (THK).

**American Woodcock:** First: 9 Mar at Rathbun Res. (RLC) and 10 Mar at Bobwhite S.P. in Wayne Co. (AB).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** First: 2 on 29 Apr in Hardin Co. (MPr). Last: 2 on 20 May at Riverton A. (BKP/LJP). High count: 17 on 7 May at Colo Ponds (HZ).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** All: 1 on 11, 13 May at Colo Ponds (HZ, MPr), 5 on 15 May and 3 on 20 May at Riverton A. (THK, BKP/LJP), 1 on 23 May at Black Hawk W.A. (PE), and 1 on 30 May near Glidden in Carroll Co. (RTh).

**Franklin's Gull:** First: 2 on 21 Mar at Little Wall L. (SJD). High count: 250 on 11 May in Mills Co. (BKP/LJP).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** First: 26 Mar in Carroll Co. (SJD). Last: 9 on 5 May at Hallett's Quarry (HZ). High count: 125 on 6 Apr at Gomer's L. in Clinton Co. (PCP).

**Iceland Gull:** A report is referred to the Records Committee.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** 1 reported at Keokuk for 29 Dec 1994 (IBL 65:49) should have been 29 Jan 1995 (SJD).

**Caspian Tern:** First: 10 May at Trumbull L. (LAS). Last: 2 on 27 May at Ingham L. (DHe). High count: 30 on 20 May at Union Slough N.W.R. (THK).

**Common Tern:** First: 2 on 17 Apr at West Okoboji (ETh-details)[2nd earliest]. Last: 31 May at Spring Run in Dickinson Co. (LAS-details). There were 4 other reports from May with details.

**Forster's Tern:** First: 15 Apr at Rathbun Res. (AB). High count: 77 on 10 May at Trumbull L. (LAS).

**Least Tern:** All (singles): 18 May at Power Plant ponds in Woodbury Co. (MPr, DCP), 10 May at Silver Maple P. in Plymouth Co. (THK), and 24 May at Power Plant ponds in Pottawattamie Co. (BKP/LJP).

**Black Tern:** First: 4 May at Montrose in Lee Co. (CE). High count: 2,000 on 15 May in Fremont Co. (THK) and on 16 May at Fomey L. (AMJ). These counts are conservative, and this species was common on most large water areas in mid-May.

**White-winged Dove:** The first record for the state was a bird at Nelson Hoskins' feeder in Ottumwa during the snow storm from 8 to 15 Apr (\*NRH-photos). A second bird was found in Le Grand on 28 Apr by Mark Proescholdt and remained until at least 16 May (\*MPr, \*JLF, \*THK-photo, \*CE, \*PCP, \*AMJ, RIA-photo). There were also records from Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and perhaps other states this spring.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** First: 21 May at Big M. (MPr). There were only 4 other reports.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** None were reported.

**Snowy Owl:** All: 4 Mar at Spencer (D. Kanago fide LAS).

**Great Gray Owl:** A bird was seen at the Cerro Gordo Co. wintering location on 1 Mar. (RGo).

**Long-eared Owl:** All: 1 found dead on 21 Apr at Ledges S.P. (JJD) and 1 on 24 Apr in Warren Co. (JSi).

**Short-eared Owl:** All: 1 on 12 Apr near Liscomb in Marshall Co. (MPr).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** All: 1 on 2 Mar in Boone Co. (SJD) and 1 heard on 27 Mar at Fairfield (DCP).

**Common Nighthawk:** First: 13 May at Amana L. (CE).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** All: 2 on 10, 13 May at Big Sand Mound Preserve in Louisa Co. (PCP, FL) and 1 on 15 May at Waubonsie S.P. (THK).

**Chimney Swift:** First: 29 Apr at Liscomb (MPr) and Fairfield (PCP). High count: 300 on 14 May in Ames (HZ).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** First: 3 May at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (JLF).



**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** On 29 May 2 were at a nest in Spencer in Clay Co. (LAS)[new county nesting record].

**Pileated Woodpecker:** On 28 Mar, a male was excavating a nest cavity at Ledges S.P. (SJD, JSi). One on 27 Apr at Stephens F. in Lucas Co. (JSi) was out of the usual range (Kent and Dinsmore 1996).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** First: 14 May at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (CE). Last: 31 May at Ledges S.P. (MPr).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** First: 16 May in Woodbury Co. (AMJ). Although generally late, pewees seemed extra late this year.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** First: 10 May at Klum L. (PCP). High count: 18 on 25 May at A. A. Call S.P. (MCK). Last: 31 May at Ledges S.P. (MPr).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** Away from the usual locations in eastern Iowa, 1 was at A. A. Call S.P. on 25 May (MCK-details) and 1 was at Swan L. in Carroll Co. on 28 May (RTh).

**Alder Flycatcher:** First: 20 May at Riverton A. (BKP/LJP). A few others were reported through the end of the period.

**Willow Flycatcher:** In spite of the many empidonax flycatchers present in late May, the only Willow reported was in Woodbury Co. on 18 May (MPr).

**Least Flycatcher:** First: 1 May in Kossuth Co. (MCK). High counts: 50 empids assumed to be mostly Leasts from Woodbury to Lyon counties on 19 May (THK) and 23 identified by call at A. A. Call S.P. (no pun intended) on 25 May (MCK). If, indeed, most of the small flycatchers are Leasts, this species is a very common migrant in Iowa.

**Eastern Phoebe:** First: 9 Mar in Appanoose Co. (RLC)[record earliest]. The next was on 19 Mar in Guthrie Co. (MPr).

**Vermillion Flycatcher:** A male was seen on 24 May at Holstein in Sac Co. (\*CLR). This is the fourth record for Iowa and the third from spring.

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** First: 3 May at Fairfield (DCP).

**Western Kingbird:** First: 8 May in Carroll Co. (RTh). The most easterly bird was in Johnson Co. on 10 May (JLF, THK). Others away from the western edge of the state were in Boone, Dickinson, and Sac counties.

**Eastern Kingbird:** First: 20 Apr west of Creston in Union Co. (RTh)[2nd earliest]. The next was on 4 May in Lee Co. (CE).

**Horned Lark:** A fledged juvenile was being fed by its parents in Johnson Co. on 13 Apr when there was 6 inches of snow on the ground (THK).

**Purple Martin:** First: 22 Apr at Sioux Center (JV).

**Tree Swallow:** First: 2 on 21 Mar at Saylorville Res. (SJD).

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** First: 2 on 24 Apr at Otter Creek M. (MPr).

**Bank Swallow:** First: 20 on 19 Apr at Twelve Mile L. in Union Co. (RTh).

**Black-billed Magpie:** A pair was found in the Loess Hills of west-central Plymouth Co. in early May and first documented on 8 May (\*JLF, \*THK). They were seen by many at the I.O.U. meeting from 16 to 18 May. They made frequent visits to a thicket where a nest was found on 9 May (\*WFH).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** A wintering female was at Sioux Center until 21 Mar (JV). There was 1 report from April and 3 from May with the last on 20 May at Ames (HZ).

**Brown Creeper:** 2 at Grammer Grove W.A. on 16 May (BPr) were late.

**Carolina Wren:** The only reports were from Fremont and Appanoose counties. Although likely under reported, this species was absent from many of its usual locations and the population appears to be down.

**Bewick's Wren:** None were reported.

**House Wren:** First: 15 Apr in Mahaska Co. (AB). No others were reported until late April.

**Winter Wren:** May reports were from Emmet Co. on the 3rd (DHe), L. Ahquabi on the 3rd (JSi), A. A. Call S.P. on the 8th (MCK), and Effigy Mounds N.M. on the 10th (DeC). The first 3 of these were likely migrants, but the last was singing in an area of the state where this species has been known to nest.

**Sedge Wren:** None were reported.

**Marsh Wren:** First: 4 May at Fairfield (DCP).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Last: 2 on 19 Apr at Rock Creek P. (MPr).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** First: 30 Mar at Coralville Res. (DLD). Last: 24 May at Kettleson Hogsback A. (ETh). High count: 15 on 5 May at Hickory Hill P. (THK).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** First: 26 Apr in Jones Co. (CE). A nest was found on 14 May at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (CE).

**Townsend's Solitaire:** All: 1 was at L. Ahquabi on 12, 13 Apr (JSi, \*AMJ).

**Veery:** First: 9 May at Moorehead P. (PE).

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** First: 3 May at Grammer Grove W.A. (MPR). High count: 7 on 23 May in Van Buren Co. (RLC).

**Swainson's Thrush:** First: 27 Apr at Grammer Grove W.A. (MPR). High count: 46 on 15 May at A. A. Call S. P. (MCK). Four other early arrivals were noted from 30 April to 2 May. There were 5 other reports of 13 to 30 birds. This species is especially noticeable in northwestern Iowa, where it seems to be concentrated by the isolated parks, groves, and farmsteads.

**Hermit Thrush:** First: 3 on 3 Apr at Grammer Grove W.A. (MPR). Last: 4 May at Dudgeon L. (MPR). There were 5 other reports from early May.

**Wood Thrush:** First: 4 May at Dudgeon L. (MPR).

**American Robin:** 300 were on the roads in Johnson Co. on 13 Apr after the snow storm (THK).

**Gray Catbird:** First: 2 May at Clive (PJW).

**Northern Mockingbird:** 1 at Dugout Creek in Dickinson Co. on 29 May (ETh) was unusually far north. Other reports were from Greene, Marshall, Muscatine, and Polk counties.

**Brown Thrasher:** First: 30 Mar in Wayne Co. (AB).

**American Pipit:** First: 16 Mar at Snake Creek M. (SJD). Last: 18 May in Woodbury Co. (MPR)[2nd latest]. From 1 to 6 were at 5 other locations in April and May.

**Cedar Waxwing:** Although this species is not generally reported because it is common, this year none were reported and none were seen by some active birders.

**Northern Shrike:** All: 12 Mar at Hickory Grove P. (MPR-details) and 7, 13, and 15 Mar at different locations in Sioux Co. (JV).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** There were the usual scattered reports.

**White-eyed Vireo:** All: 10 May at Klum L. in Louisa Co. (PCP), 11 and 26 May in Warren Co. (AMJ, JSi), and 28 May at Moorehead P. in Ida Co. (PE). The latter was far from its normal range. This species was not found at some of its usual locations in southeastern Iowa.

**Belt's Vireo:** The only report was from Riverton A. on 20 May (BKP/LJP).

**Solitary Vireo:** First: 23 Apr at Spirit Lake (ETh)[3rd earliest]. Last: 30 May in Cerro Gordo, Johnson, Marshall, and Sioux counties (RGo, THK, MPR, JV)[ties 2nd and 3rd latest]. This early migrant was mostly found after 10 May this year.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** First: 3 May at Croton Unit (CE).

**Warbling Vireo:** First: 4 May in Lee Co. (CE).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** First: 11 May in Warren Co. (AMJ). Last: 31 in Dickinson, Sioux, Story, and Winneshiek counties (LAS, JV, PWM, DeC)[ties 2nd and 3rd latest]. Most of the reports were after 20 May. A report from 16 Aug 1996 (JBL 67:24) should have been 16 Sep (DeC).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** First: 2 on 3 May at Croton Unit (CE). All other reports were after 18 May, which suggests that this species was late, at least for some observers.

**Blue-winged Warbler:** First: 2 on 3 May at Croton Unit (CE). A Brewster's hybrid was found in Lee Co. on 10 May (RLC). There were 5 reports from northwestern Iowa in late May with 1 at Oak Grove P. in Sioux Co. on 29 May as a state and county bird for John Van Dyk.

**Golden-winged Warbler:** First: 3 on 11 May in Johnson Co. (CE). Last: 30 May at A. A. Call S.P. (MCK) and Pine L. (MPR)[2nd and 3rd latest]. From 1 to 2 were reported at 7 other locations.

**Tennessee Warbler:** First: 5 May at Fairfield (DCP). Other reports were from 11 to 31 May, with 6 reports on the 31st.

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** First: 27 Apr at Coralville Res. (DLD). Last: 29 May at Oak Grove P. (JV)[2nd latest]. High count: 11 on 10 May in Warren Co. (AMJ).

**Nashville Warbler:** First: 4 May at Dudgeon L. (MPR). Last: 30 May at Algona (MCK) and Lake View (PE). High count: 30 on 13 May at Dudgeon L. (CE).

**Northern Parula:** First: 25 Apr at L. Macbride (JLF).

**Yellow Warbler:** First: 3 on 7 May at Rock Creek P. (MPR). High count: 32 on 19 May at Cardinal M. (DeC).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** First: 10 May at Dudgeon L. (MPR). High count: 21 on 25 May at A. A. Call S.P. (MCK).

**Magnolia Warbler:** First: 11 May in Johnson Co. (CE) and at Grammer Grove W.A. (MPR). High count: 15 on 25 May at A. A. Call S.P. (MCK).

**Cape May Warbler:** First: 10 May in Lee (RLC) and Dickinson (ETh) counties. Last: 2 females on 29 May at Algona (MCK-details)[record latest]. Females migrate later than males, are hard to identify, and hide in the tops of conifers; however, they didn't escape Matt Kenne. High count: 6 on 18 May at Decorah (Tex Sordahl fide DeC). There were 2 other reports, both from warbler-watcher Mark Proescholdt.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** None were reported. This species is much more likely in Iowa in fall.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** First: 2 Apr in Johnson Co. (THK). Last: 2 on 21 May at Big M. (MPR). High count: 40 on 2 May at Ames (PWM). With the late spring, yellow-rumps lingered longer than usual.



- Black-throated Gray Warbler:** A female was found by James Huntington and seen by Carol Thompson and John Cordell at a woods owned by Jim Fuller near Cedar Bluff in Cedar Co. on 10 May (\*JH). This is the second record for Iowa.
- Black-throated Green Warbler:** First: 3 May at Croton Unit (CE). Last: 30 May at Lake View (PE). High count: 10 on 24 May in Dickinson Co. (ETH).
- Blackburnian Warbler:** First: 11 May at Carroll (RTh). Last: 31 May in Boone, Dickinson, Ida, and Warren counties (MPR, LAS, PE, AMJ). High count: 10 at Moorehead P. on 28 May.
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** First: 20 Apr at Ledges S.P. (R. Sarno and D. Schmitz fide JJD). Others away from the usual locations at L. Macbride and Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. were 1 at Pine L. in Hardin Co. on 29 Apr and 13 May (MPR) and in Warren Co. on 11 May (AB). A Sutton's Warbler (Yellow-throated Warbler x Northern Parula hybrid) was described at L. Ahquabi on 5 May (\*JSi).
- Pine Warbler:** All: 20 April at Muskrat Sl. (CE-details)[2nd earliest], 26 Apr at Mason City (\*CJF), and 14 May at Ames (JJD-details).
- Prairie Warbler:** All: 1 on 6 May and 2 singing males on 10 May at L. Macbride (CE).
- Palm Warbler:** First: 27 Apr at Grammer Grove W.A. (MPR). Last: 31 May at Prairie L. in Dickinson Co. (LAS)[record latest]. Other late birds were on 21 May were at Dudgeon L. (MPR) and Kettleson Hogsback A. (ETH). High count: 40 on 15 May at Cardinal M. (DeC). This species was definitely late this year.
- Bay-breasted Warbler:** First: 24 May at Grammer Grove W.A. (MPR). Last: 31 May at Kettleson Hogsback A. (LAS)[ties 2nd latest].
- Blackpoll Warbler:** First: 10 May at Ames (PWM). Last: 31 May at Prairie L. (LAS).
- Cerulean Warbler:** First: 4 May at Croton Unit (CE). Unusual records from western and northern Iowa were singles on 11 May at Swan L. in Carroll Co. (RTh), 21 May in Cass Co. (MAP-details), and 28 May at Moorehead P. (PE).
- Black-and-white Warbler:** First: 30 Apr at Liscomb (MPR).
- American Redstart:** High count: 45 at Christopherson Sl. in Dickinson Co. on 24 May (ETH).
- Prothonotary Warbler:** First: 1 May north of Iowa City (JLF).
- Worm-eating Warbler:** All: 2 on 4 May at Croton Unit (CE) and 1 on 10 May at Klum L. in Louisa Co. (PCP).
- Ovenbird:** First: 27 Apr at Stephens F. in Lucas Co. (JSi).
- Northern Waterthrush:** First: 25 Apr at Coralville Res. (THK, JLF). Last: 31 May at Prairie L. (LAS). Other late birds were at Algona on 30 May (MCK) and Kettleson Hogsback A. on 29 May (ETH).
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** First: 26 Apr at Palisades-Dows in Linn Co. (CE). Aside from birds at the usual locations at Croton Unit, Lacey-Keosauqua S.P., and Ledges S.P., 1 was at Moorehead P. on 19 May where it has been encountered in previous years (PE).
- Kentucky Warbler:** First: 3 May at Croton Unit (CE).
- Connecticut Warbler:** First: 10 May at Klum L. in Louisa Co. (PCP). The 6 others reported were all from 23 to 31 May and 3 of these were in northwestern Iowa, with the last on 31 May at Prairie L. (LAS).
- Mourning Warbler:** First: 18 May (3 locations). Last: 31 May (5 locations). High count: 13 on 25 May at A. A. Call S.P. (MCK). There were many reports this year.
- Hooded Warbler:** None were reported.
- Wilson's Warbler:** First: 2 on 7 May at Fairfield (DCP). Last: 31 May at Ames (PWM), Ledges S.P. (MPR), and Prairie L. (LAS)[ties record latest].
- Canada Warbler:** First: 20 May at Grammer Grove W.A. (BPr). High count: 11 on 25 May at A. A. Call S.P. (MCK).
- Yellow-breasted Chat:** All: 13 May at Dudgeon L. (CE), 24 May at Indianola (JSi), and 23 to 29 May in Marshalltown (MPR). None were found at some usual locations in southeastern Iowa.
- Summer Tanager:** All: 1 female at a feeder in Burr Oak in Winneshiek Co. from 6 to 17 May (DeC).
- Scarlet Tanager:** First: 2 on 14 May at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (CE).
- Western Tanager:** All (males): 2 to 3 May at Des Moines (\*PR), 3 May at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (\*JLF), and 7 to 13 May at Ames (\*KH, \*KAN, \*JJD, RIA-photo)[3rd latest].
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** First: 26 Apr at Croton Unit (RIC, THK). Most did not appear until mid-May.
- Blue Grosbeak:** There were no reports away from the western edge of the state.
- Lazuli Bunting:** All (single males): 18 May in west-central Plymouth Co. (\*JSi), 18 May at Stone S.P. in Woodbury Co. (\*KK, \*AMJ), 18 to 22 May at Mason City (\*ESM), and 23 to 29 at the rural home of Annie and Walter Leich north of Glenwood in Mills Co. (\*THK-photo, RIA-photo). This number is unprecedented. There are only 8 previously accepted records. Five of the birds, including the latter two above, were at feeders.
- Indigo Bunting:** First: 7 May at Fairfield (DCP). Most did not appear until mid-May.

- Dickcissel:** First: 3 on 10 May in Appanoose Co. (RLC).
- Eastern Towhee:** First: 4 on 29 Mar at Croton Unit (CE).
- Spotted Towhee:** Last: 19 May at Hidden Bridge A. in Lyon Co. (THK)[ties latest]. Other May reports were from Woodbury Co. on the 16th (AMJ) and Clay Co. on the 10th (LAS). One at Riverton A. on 5 Mar (SJD) may have wintered. April records were from Carroll, Greene, and Story counties.
- American Tree Sparrow:** Last: 5 on 20 Apr at Union Slough N.W.R. (MCK).
- Chipping Sparrow:** First: 1 Apr at Liscomb (BPr). High count: 150 on 15 May in flocks along the road at the base of the Loess Hills in Fremont Co. (THK). On 19 May, 31 were on a driveway in Shenandoah (MT, JB). The migration appears to have been late and more evident than usual.
- Clay-colored Sparrow:** First: 1 May at Clive (PJW). Last: 20 May in Hardin (MPr) and O'Brien (THK) counties. High count: 34 on 10 May in Clay Co. (LAS). There were more reports and I personally saw more than ever before. Although the greatest numbers were in western Iowa, there were 7 reports from eastern Iowa.
- Field Sparrow:** First: 29 Mar in Monona Co. (PE).
- Vesper Sparrow:** First: 4 Apr in Sioux Co. (JV). On 13 Apr, after the snow storm, 21 were noted in Appanoose Co. (RLC) and 30 in Johnson Co. (THK).
- Lark Sparrow:** First: 1 May in Poweshiek Co. (MPr).
- Savannah Sparrow:** First: 20 Mar at Snake Creek M. (SJD).
- Henslow's Sparrow:** All: 12 Apr in Appanoose Co. (RLC)[3rd earliest].
- Le Conte's Sparrow:** First: 28 Mar at Harrier M. (SJD, JSi). Last: 16 May in Woodbury Co. (AMJ).
- Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** All: several on 18, 19 May at Deweys Pasture in Clay Co. (Steve Fairbairn fide JJD).
- Fox Sparrow:** First: 4 Mar at Davenport (PCP). Last: 19 Apr at McFarland P. in Story Co. (PWM).
- Lincoln's Sparrow:** First: 12 Apr in Appanoose Co. (RLC). Last: 31 May at Spring Run W.A. (LAS)[record latest]. Other late birds were in Mason City on 30 May (CJF)[ties 2nd latest] and 29 May at Dugout Creek (ETH).
- White-throated Sparrow:** Last: 29 May at Decorah (DeC).
- White-crowned Sparrow:** Last: 17 May at McFarland P. (PWM).
- Harris's Sparrow:** Last: 31 May at Spring Run W.A. (LAS)[record latest]. Another was late on 30 May at Oak Grove P. in Sioux Co. (JV)[ties 2nd latest]. High count: 45 on 12 May at Union Slough N.W.R. (MCK). This species was seen in many locations in western Iowa in mid-May and at a few locations in eastern Iowa.
- Dark-eyed Junco:** Last: 29 Apr at Pine L. (MPr).
- Lapland Longspur:** Last: 90 on 20 Apr at Union Slough N.W.R. (MCK). High count: 20,000 on 15 Mar at Harrier M. (SJD). There were 8 reports of 1,000 or more from mid-March to mid-April as well as many other reports from all areas of the state.
- Smith's Longspur:** All: 2 on 28 Mar in Carroll Co. (SJD), 31 on 11 Apr in Warren Co. (AB-photo), 1 on 26 April at Tomahawk M. in Sac Co. (PE), and 5 on 27 Apr at Union Slough N.W.R. (\*MCK).
- Chestnut-collared Longspur:** All: 16 on 10 Apr east of Sutherland in O'Brien Co. (\*DK), 1 on 11 Apr northwest of Larchwood in Lyon Co. (\*DHe), 2 on 12 Apr near Percival in Fremont Co. (\*LJP/BKP), 1 on 12 Apr in SW Woodbury Co. (WFH), and 1 on 12 Apr at Grover's L. in Dickinson Co. (\*LAS, \*ETH-photo).
- Snow Bunting:** Last: 14 Mar in Hardin Co. (MPr). High count: 800 on 1 Mar in Dickinson Co. (LAS).
- Bobolink:** First: 29 Apr at Kettleson Hogsback A. (DCH).
- Red-winged Blackbird:** High count: 25,000 on 13 Mar at Otter Creek M. (SJD).
- Eastern Meadowlark:** First: 10 on 8 Mar in Lee Co. (SJD). Four reports from northwestern Iowa were quite unusual: In western Sioux Co., 1 was heard and seen next to a Western Meadowlark on 17 Mar, a first county record for John Van Dyk. At Copp Prairie in Kossuth Co., 2 were singing on 27 Apr (MCK). At Gitchie Manitou State Preserve in the extreme northwestern corner of Iowa, 1 was heard on 19 May (THK). In Dickinson Co., north of the Okoboji golf course, 1 was heard on 29 May (LAS). On the breeding bird atlas study (Jackson et al. 1996), Eastern Meadowlarks were present in each of these counties except for Sioux County.
- Western Meadowlark:** The first was singing in Sioux Co. on 17 Mar (JV).
- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** First: 12 Apr at Harrier M. (JJD) and Fomey L. (BKP/LJP). By 18 Apr, 23 were at Dunbar Sl. (RTh), which is early.
- Rusty Blackbird:** Last: 29 Apr at Otter Creek M. (CE)[record latest].



*Chestnut-collared Longspur,  
Grover's Lake, 12 April  
1997. Photo by Ed Thelen*



**Brewer's Blackbird:** All: 1 female on 6 Apr at Goose L. in Clinton Co. (PCP), 1 female on 13 Apr near Union Slough N.W.R. (MCK-details), 5 males on 13 Apr with buffalo near Benedict in Kossuth Co. (MCK), 16 males and 2 females on 20 Apr at Spring Run W.A. (LAS-details).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** First: 16 Mar at Dunbar Sl. (SJD). Many were reported from the following counties: Boone, Calhoun, Clay, Dickinson, Fremont, Greene, Guthrie, Monona, Pottawattamie, Tama, and Warren.

**Common Grackle:** 1 wintering at a feeder in Sioux Center stayed until 8 Mar (JV).

**Orchard Oriole:** First: 3 May at Laeey-Keosauqua S.P. (JLF). Others were from Allamakee, Jefferson, Johnson, and Warren counties. Birds in western Iowa are not usually reported.

**Northern Oriole:** First: 5 May at Liscomb (BPr).

**Purple Finch:** Last: 9 May at Ames (JJD). There were only 6 reports from 9 Mar to 9 May, which fits the general impression that they were scarce.

**Red Crossbill:** All: 2 on 19 Mar near Polk City (SJD), 1 on 21 Mar at Jester P. (SJD), up to 14 at Ida Grove from 13 Apr to 10 May (PE), 4 on 2 May at Ames (Dave Edwards fide HZ), and 6 on 27 May north of Glenwood (THK, RIA-photo).

**Pine Siskin:** All: 1 or 2 in Mar and 1 on 2 May at Sioux Center (JV) and 2 on 27 May at the feeders of Annie Leich north of Glenwood (THK) and a fledged young there on 25 May (Annie Leich fide THK).

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** All: at Muscatine, 1 on 18 Apr (THK) and 2 on 13 May (FL) and 10 in Louisa Co. on 10 May (PCP).

## COMMENT

The data comprised 35 reports and 35 documentations (of 18 species). I made 1,520 entries into a computerized database, which is 25 percent less than last spring. Perhaps the decrease was due to fewer birding days due to the cold April and May.

The documentations were of high quality, and a number of rare birds were documented by individuals who are not regular reporters. It is nice to see an influx of active younger birders. I would put 9 in that category (although it is all relative), with many from northwestern Iowa, an area of the state that used to have few contributors to the Field Reports. I recommend late-May birding in northwestern Iowa.

The two new books on Iowa's birds (*Birds in Iowa* by Kent and Dinsmore and *The Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas* by Jackson et al.) were useful to several observers and in writing this report. There were a surprising number of new early and late dates, and many of these were carefully noted by contributors. The maps in both books were useful in identifying new county records. For example, I could tell that the Eastern Meadowlark that I heard at the extreme northwestern corner of Iowa was not unprecedented.

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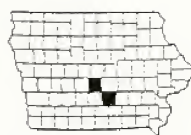
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## A LATE FALL INFLUX OF POMARINE JAEGERES IN IOWA

STEPHEN J. DINSMORE

In November 1996, an noticeable movement of jaegers occurred in the upper Midwest. Most of the birds were identified as Pomarine Jaegers, although a few Parasitic Jaegers were also reported. During this period, I observed no fewer than five different jaegers in Iowa, at least four of which were Pomarines. Here I will summarize these sightings and other records of Pomarine Jaegers in Iowa.



On 10 November 1996, I was scanning Saylorville Reservoir from Cherry Glen Recreation Area when I noticed a very dark, gull-like bird chasing Ring-billed Gulls along the west shore of the lake. After a few seconds, I discerned the white color at the base of the primaries and concluded the bird was a jaeger. From 9:35 a.m. to 12:33 p.m., I tried to get closer to photograph the bird, but without a boat this was difficult. I left without identifying the bird, although I tentatively concluded the bird was probably a Parasitic Jaeger. I returned on the 11th and found two jaegers near the marina, both of which were Pomarine Jaegers. The last sighting was of two juveniles on 22 November.

I took most of the following notes on the 11th, with some additional information later gleaned from photos. The first bird (intermediate phase juvenile--seen on all visits) had a wingspan slightly greater than that of Ring-billed Gulls it chased on numerous occasions. In normal flight, the wings seemed fairly broad-based and the flight was lumbering, much like that of a Herring Gull. The dark bill was fairly stout, very similar in size and shape to the bill of a Ring-billed Gull. The bill was bicolored: the distal one third was dark while the basal two thirds was lighter-colored. The bill also showed a strong hook at the tip. The eye and a small area around the eye were dark. The head and neck were light brown, contrasting with a darker brown mantle. The mantle was speckled with fine, buff-colored spots. The underparts were the same color as the head with darker barring on the belly and flanks. The undertail coverts were very light brown with darker barring. The tail was dark brown. The central rectrices were barely longer than the rest and were blunt-tipped. I studied the wing pattern in great detail. The upperwings were dark brown with buff edges to the wing coverts, particularly the secondary coverts. The bases of the three outer primary shafts showed a lot of white



*Pomarine Jaeger at Saylorville Reservoir, 11 November 1996.  
Photo by Stephen J. Dinsmore*



while the next three shafts showed smaller amounts of white. The undersides of the bases of primaries showed a lot of white, and there was a prominent white crescent on the underprimary coverts. When perched on the water, the bird's wingtips barely extended beyond the central rectrices.

The second bird was first seen on 11 November, although it may have been present on the 10th. The size and structure were identical to those of the first bird, although this bird was much darker. The white color in the primary shafts was slightly more extensive, with prominent white color on the basal half of the outer five shafts. Other than the white primary shafts, the upperwing appeared dark and lacked the obvious buff mottling of the first bird. The vent also showed more white color, and the underside of the basal half of each rectrix was white. When viewed from underneath, the wing and tail patterns recalled an immature Golden Eagle. The rump was barred. The belly was dark brown and unbarred. The underwing pattern was similar to that of the first bird, except that I noticed a fine, lighter mottling on the secondaries and their coverts. On the basis of these marks, I concluded it was a dark phase bird. It was clearly not an adult because of the short central rectrices. It was either a subadult or a juvenile that lacked barring on the belly. Both birds were present on the 16th. On the 22nd, there were two intermediate phase juveniles together above the dam, one later seen below the dam harassing gulls. The combination of size, wing shape, amount of white in the primaries, shape of the central rectrices, and bill size were used to rule out juvenile Parasitic and Long-tailed jaegers.

On 16 November 1996, I saw a juvenile Pomarine Jaeger above the dam of Red Rock Reservoir in Marion County. When I arrived at the overlook on the south side of the dam, one of the first birds I saw was a dark, gull-like bird chasing Ring-billed Gulls in the middle of the lake. The dark coloration, size, shape, and white in the primary shafts identified the bird as a jaeger. I studied the bird from 1:12 to 1:55 p.m. The structure and plumage were similar to those of the Pomarine Jaegers seen earlier at Saylorville Reservoir except for the pattern on the underparts. The underparts were dark chocolate brown, except for a very slightly paler belly with dark barring. Based on the very dark coloration and barred underparts, I concluded the bird was a dark phase juvenile. On the 27th I saw two jaegers together above the dam. Both birds were juveniles and appeared similar in plumage. However, because of the distance and poor light conditions, I could not determine their color phases. On the 30th, Jim Sinclair and I observed three jaegers together above and below the dam. One bird was very dark and lacked barring on the belly. This was probably the possible subadult seen earlier at Saylorville. The other two birds were juveniles, one dark phase and one intermediate phase. The last sighting was of a juvenile on 14 December above the dam.

On 17 November 1996, James J. Dinsmore and I observed a juvenile jaeger at Spirit Lake in Dickinson County. We watched the bird from 1:45 to 2:43 p.m. as it rested on the water in the middle of the lake. It briefly raised its wings twice, allowing us to see a fairly large white patch at the base of the outer primaries, formed by white bases to the primary shafts. Structurally, the bill seemed rather large, having a similar appearance to the bills of Pomarine Jaegers seen earlier in central Iowa. Otherwise, the bird was very dark brown overall except for paler flanks, chest, and nape. When the bird rose to the top of wave crests, I detected some horizontal darker barring on the chest. The only size comparison was to a Red-breasted Merganser; the jaeger was at least as long as the merganser and was slightly chunkier and bigger-headed. The dark brown coloration and barring on the chest indicated the

bird was probably a juvenile. Because of the slightly paler nape and underparts, I concluded the bird was an intermediate phase. The bird was likely a Pomarine Jaeger for two reasons: the large size and the large-billed appearance.

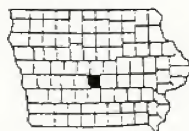
Using differences in plumage, I tried to determine the total number of birds present. At Saylorville, there were at least three birds; the possible dark subadult and two intermediate phase juveniles. There was also the dark phase juvenile present at Red Rock from 16-30 November. That makes a minimum of four birds between the two areas. There may have been more as it is not known if the intermediate phase juveniles seen at both reservoirs were in fact the same individuals. However, the possible dark subadult seen at Saylorville moved to Red Rock Reservoir later in November. These records represent the second and third reports of Pomarine Jaeger in Iowa. The only other record is of two juveniles from 28 September-2 October 1988 at Saylorville Reservoir (S. J. Dinsmore, *Iowa Bird Life* 59: 20-21, 1989).

612 1/2 W. Magnolia, Fort Collins, CO 80521

## RUFF IN POLK COUNTY

BERY ENGBRETSSEN

We tend to view our agricultural monocultures of corn and soybeans as not particularly good birding habitat, but on 10 May 1996 I stopped briefly to view some shorebirds near the road in a wet, last year's beanfield between Grimes and West Des Moines in Polk County. In the mixed flock, one bird immediately stood out because of what appeared to be a rather smallish head on a plump body. It was clearly larger than the Pectoral Sandpipers and somewhat larger than the Lesser Yellowlegs nearby. The bill was black, a bit longer than the head with the slightest downward curve. All of the back and tertial feathers were light tipped with dark and then lighter brown bands away from the tips. The tertials were long, obscuring the tail and seemed to blow about loosely in the breeze. The underparts were mostly white except for some scattered dark bars. The legs were pale yellow. I was somewhat puzzled by this rather nondescript shorebird until it obligingly stretched its wings above its head revealing white underwings and a U-shaped patch of white around the base of the tail. At this point I knew I was observing a Reeve (or was it a Ruff?).



As noted previously (Sinclair, *Iowa Bird Life* 66:65-66, 1996), this species is highly variable, even in basic plumage. After reviewing field guides, I finally concluded this was actually the male of the species (Ruff), but noted that upon review the Records Committee could not agree as to its sex. It probably must remain *Philomachus pugnax*, sex unrecorded. This once again confirms the highly variable nature of this species.

This is the eighth record of this species to be confirmed in Iowa. I suspect that a fair number may pass through our area undetected, since this bird was quite plain, in a mixed flock, and not in a highly birded area--a soybean field.

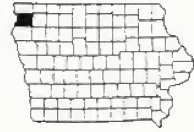
12825 NW 127th Court, Des Moines, IA 50325



# RED-THROATED LOON IN NORTHWESTERN IOWA

JOHN VAN DYK

In the early afternoon of 19 April 1996, I discovered a Red-throated Loon in a large gravel pit five miles south of Sioux Center in Sioux County. The gravel pits, located just east of Highway 75 and north of Highway 10, form relatively large bodies of water and are good places for migrant waterfowl.



As I approached the quarry from the west, I noted from a distance that a variety of birds was present: about 45 Double-crested Cormorants, several Pied-billed Grebes, some Lesser Scaups and Gadwalls, a small flock of Franklin's Gulls, and six American Avocets along the shore. I scanned the water with my binoculars, and noted the loon some distance away from the cormorants. As soon as I saw the bird, I recognized it as a Red-throated Loon: a slender loon smaller than the cormorants, with grayish upturned bill and its head tilted upwards, as if it were scanning the sky. Every few minutes or so the bird would dive and come up some distance away. I parked my car at the edge of the gravel road alongside the lake, and used my Zoom Balscope through the lowered car window. The sky was overcast, and the water calm. The light was excellent. The loon at times would emerge only 30 yards from my car, allowing me an excellent view. I observed it for about 40 minutes.

The loon was noticeably smaller than the nearby Double-crested Cormorants. Its upturned bill was distinctive, even from a distance. The slender profile gave the bird a snakelike appearance. Whenever it emerged, its head was slanted upwards. The back was gray flecked with many white spots. The back of the neck and head were gray. The face was white. The reddish eye was located at the juncture of the white face and the gray crown. A light spot in front of the eye gave the eye a distinctly separated appearance. The bird's flanks, just above the waterline, were mottled light and dark.

After about 35 minutes of close observation, a large piece of road machinery came rumbling by, obviously spooking the bird. It first took off, paddling the water with its feet, but returned to rest on the water. A few minutes later, however, the bird took off again, this time heading directly for me and flying low over my car. It circled the lakes as it gained altitude, and at first I thought it might land again. But then it headed to the northwest. I followed the bird in my binoculars as long as I could. As it disappeared from sight, I could not help but mumble: Happy landings! Thanks for stopping by!

*736 East 1st Street, Sioux Center, IA 51250*

## RED KNOTS AT UNION SLOUGH NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

MATTHEW C. KENNE

I arrived at the little bridge one mile north of the headquarters of Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge in Kossuth County, at about 9:00 a.m. on 25 August 1996. The sheetwater and mudflats there had been the best location for migratory shorebirds on the refuge for several weeks. Almost immediately, I noticed two large, pale shorebirds with approximately 200 other mixed species 100-150 yards away.



The good news was that I thought these birds could be Red Knots. The bad news was that my spotting scope was locked in my Jeep in an auto-repair shop 25 miles away! After a nerve-wracking stop-and-go stalk down a dike, I was finally able to view the birds from about 30 yards away.

The two birds were larger than adjacent Pectoral Sandpipers, about the same size as Killdeer, but they looked fatter with shorter legs. They had straight, black bills about the same length as their heads. One bird was pale gray above and white below with a pale superciliary line. I couldn't see any subterminal feather markings from this distance with binoculars. The other bird was brownish on the back with no eyeline and a pale rusty "robin-red" below. The bird appeared to be molting to basic plumage as its face was grayish and the belly color was mottled.

Once, as the knots flew briefly, I saw a paler rump on the gray bird and a narrow white wing stripe along the base of the primaries and secondaries. They made calls in flight unlike those that I am familiar with.

Later, I called the Birdline, but no one else got to see the knots. A strong cold front with thunderstorms that night triggered their departure. These were the first Red Knots at Union Slough since one (also molting from alternate plumage) on 31 August 1989, and about the fifteenth fall record from Iowa.

709 North Phillips, Algona, IA 50511

## BLACK-NECKED STILTS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

MARK PROESCHOLDT

On 18 May 1996, Beth Proescholdt, Russ Widner, and I were heading to the spring I.O.U. meeting at Burlington and watching flooded farm fields for shorebirds. In Washington County, just south of highway 92 along highway 218, we saw a large shorebird in a flooded creek valley. We stopped, and were surprised and delighted to see three Black-necked Stilts in the field.

These large, distinctive, slim-bodied shorebirds were black on the head, back of neck, back, and wings. They were white on the underside of the body--the chin, sides of the neck, belly, and undertail coverts. They had very long, bright pink legs and a long, straight black bill. Two of the stilts had dark brown backs while one had a very black back. The National Geographic field guide states that the females are browner above.

Many people saw them on 19 May while at the spring I.O.U. meeting. According to *Birds in Iowa* (Kent and Dinsmore, 1996), this sighting is one of six recent well-substantiated records with five records from the spring and one from the fall.

P. O. Box 65, Liscomb, IA 50148



*Black-necked Stilt near Ainsworth, 18 May 1996.  
Photo by Thomas H. Kent*



## BROWN PELICAN IN DES MOINES COUNTY

JIM FULLER

On 1 November 1996 Chuck Fuller was amazed to see a Brown Pelican fly from below Lock and Dam #18 on the Mississippi River north of Burlington. The only access to this area is from the Illinois side of the river, and I was there shortly after sunrise the morning of 4 November. I immediately located a Brown Pelican close to the Illinois shore just below the lock. During the next 20 minutes, I watched the bird as it drifted downstream about 300-400 yards until it was in the middle of the river. Since the main navigation channel at this location is through the lock along the Illinois shore, most of the river here is considered to be in Iowa.



There were also American White Pelicans in the vicinity and, in comparison, the Brown Pelican appeared to be 20 percent smaller. This was generally a drab, dull brown and gray bird with an enormous bill. The back and wing were a dull brown with light mottling. The back of the neck, head, and crown were also brown. The underparts, including the front of the neck, were a light gray mottled color. From these features I concluded that this was the plumage of a juvenile bird. The neck was very long, and the eye was dark. The light gray bill, which was huge both in width and length, appeared rounded on the end. The bird kept the bill tucked against its breast. The tail was short and brown. I never did see the bird fly, and it was silent during the viewing period.

Brown Pelican is a resident of salt water habitats from the mid-Atlantic to the Gulf states as well as the Pacific coast of California. Vagrancy inland, particularly in the spring, and to Midwestern states is well documented. There are seven previous Iowa records for Brown Pelican, only one of which occurred in the fall, but that October sighting was also from the Mississippi River in Lee County. There are five spring (March-May) records and one summer record from July. All of these sightings were from the southern half of the state.

6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, IA 52240

### IN MEMORIAM: PHILIP A. DUMONT

On 12 February 1996, Philip DuMont passed away in Chapel Hill, Carolina. He had been a member of the I.O.U. since 1924 and at the time of his death, had been a member of the organization longer than any other member. Phil was born on 9 July 1903 in Rochester, Minnesota but his family soon moved to Davenport and then Des Moines where he attended high school. He completed a B.S. degree in Biology at Drake University in 1926. In 1927 he joined the American Museum of Natural History in New York City where we worked in the bird department until 1931. During that time he spent 16 months in Madagascar studying birds as part of a museum expedition.

In 1931, he returned to Iowa and completed his manuscript on Birds of Polk County Iowa which was published in 1931. He spent part of 1932 attending the University of California at Berkeley but returned to Iowa that fall and worked on the bird collection at the University of Iowa. That project expanded into a monograph, A revised list of the Birds of Iowa which was published in *University of Iowa Studies in Natural History* (volume 15, number 5, 1933). This is the second complete survey

of the birds of Iowa and is especially valuable since he gathered information from many small private bird collections, some of which are no longer extant.

In the fall of 1933, he was hired by Jay N. (Ding) Darling, noted conservationist and syndicated cartoonist for the Des Moines Register. Darling paid his salary for several months until he was hired by the Iowa Fish and Game Commission as a wildlife management biologist. DuMont's job was to survey northern Iowa and to locate likely sites that might be purchased as wildlife management areas. Included among the sites visited by DuMont are the lands that are now Deweys Pasture and Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge.

In 1935 Phil took a position with the U. S. Biological Survey (now the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) as a biologist at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. He soon moved to Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge in South Dakota and in 1939 moved to Washington, D.C. where he was Administrative Assistant to the Chief of the national wildlife refuge system. He spent the remainder of his career there where among other things he was responsible for producing brochures on the birds, mammals, and other items about the national wildlife refuge system. He retired in 1972 and moved to Chapel Hill in 1986.

Although Iowa birds know Phil best for his 1933 monograph, he also produced a remarkable series of articles on Iowa birds. He published about 70 articles on Iowa birds, mostly between 1929 and 1936. Many were published in *Iowa Bird Life* but others appeared in a number of other national and regional journals. Many of these are descriptions of new species, subspecies, or nesting species in Iowa as well as descriptions of significant sightings or birds that were collected. Collectively they are one of the most important contributions to ornithology by any individual in the history of Iowa ornithology.

He married Jean Guthrie in 1935, and they had three daughters and a son who survive him. His remains were returned to Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina, an area that he loved to visit. Although he spent the last 60 years of his life outside of Iowa, he continued to have a strong interest in the birds of Iowa and enjoyed visits from Iowa birders. In 1986, he was the featured speaker at the fall I.O.U. meeting in Waterloo. An previous article about him includes more details about him (Dinsmore, J. J. *Iowa Bird Life* 57:1-2, 1987).--James J. Dinsmore



*Philip A. DuMont,  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
March 1992.*



# I.O.U. BUSINESS

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Tama, 5 April 1997, 10:00 a.m.-1:45 p.m.*

Carol Thompson, presiding, Mary Kuhlman, secretary

Present: Dan Dorrance, Ann Johnson, Mary Kuhlman, Jim Scheib, Carol Thompson. Also attending: Rick Hollis, Hank Zaletel, and Linda Zaletel.

The treasurer's report for 1996 was distributed. After several corrections subsequent to the board meeting, it showed an excess of revenues over expenses of \$1,887.64 (see *IBL* 67:68-69). Jim Scheib suggested the organization consider redistributing the duties of the treasurer. The board discussed ideas for separating the financial duties and maintaining the database. This will be considered at a later date. Thompson distributed the budget for 1997; estimated expenses and income were \$27,660 and \$13,865. A major one-time expense is for the Breeding Bird Atlas project.

### Committee Reports

Records: No report.

Membership: No report.

Library-Historical: No report.

Nominations: Thompson reported that they are still working on a slate of nominees.

Spring Count: No report. A volunteer is needed to continue this count.

Field Trips: An owl trip is planned for 12 April and a shorebirds trip for 26 April.

Environmental: No report.

Partners in Flight: Thompson reported that she sent a letter with the birding area recommendations and has given oral comments on the Conservation Plan for Dissected Till Plains.

Education Booklet: Linda Zaletel reported that editing of the revised edition is in progress. It was moved (Johnson, seconded by Scheib) to print 1,000 copies of the booklet. Motion carried. It was moved (Johnson, seconded by Scheib) to sell the booklets for \$7.00 each plus \$2.50 shipping and handling. Motion carried. Review copies will be sent, and copies of the new booklet will be kept with the I.O.U. display.

Breeding Bird Atlas: Thompson reported that distribution of the books is continuing. Ann Johnson designed labels to be placed in the donated books. Plans are being made for the book to be on-line.

Iowa Birdline: No report.

### Other Items

REAP Grant Proposal: Linda Zaletel reported on a grant being written to fund a middle school educational booklet, "Iowa Birds of Two Worlds." It was moved (Dorrance, seconded by Johnson) to co-sponsor this grant and donate \$2,000 toward the project. Motion carried. This money will be spent only if the grant is awarded. Linda Zaletel will coordinate the project.

Upcoming meetings: The spring 1997 meeting will be in Sioux City on 16-18 May. The fall 1997 meeting will be 19-21 September at Camp IO-DIS-ECA near Iowa City. The 75th anniversary meeting will be held in Ames in the spring of 1998.

Feeder Survey: It was moved (Scheib, seconded by Dorrance) to contract for the data entry for three years of the feeder survey and to authorize the ISU proposal for analysis of the data. Motion carried. The estimated cost is \$3,400. Long-term options for the feeder survey will be discussed at the spring meeting.

Rare Bird Hosts: It was moved (Dorrance, seconded by Johnson) that members can recommend to the board that hosts of rare birds receive a certificate of appreciation and a one year membership to I.O.U. Motion carried. Ann Johnson will design the certificate.

Web Page: Ann Johnson reported that the organization may want to consider buying server space. She will investigate options.

Media Guide: Information about the M.O.U. media guide was discussed. The board will consider developing one in the future.

Dues: It was moved (Johnson, seconded by Dorrance) to recommend the dues for regular, first family, and institutions be raised to \$20.00 per year beginning in 1998. Motion carried.

## SPRING BUSINESS MEETING

*Sioux City, 17 May 1997, 3:50-4:47 p.m.*

Carol Thompson, presiding, Mary Kuhlman, secretary

It was moved (Zaletel, seconded by Allen) that the minutes of the fall business meeting be approved.  
Motion carried.

The treasurer's report for 1996 was distributed. It showed an excess of revenues over expenses of \$6,659.04. The revised budget was distributed. Scheib discussed the duties of the treasurer and suggested that a new registrar position be established for maintaining the data base of records. This will be discussed by the board.

### Committee Reports

Records: No report.

Membership: The display was set up in the foyer. It is available from the committee.

Publications: No report.

Library-Historical: No report.

Breeding Bird Atlas: Thompson reported that the publication project is completed. Distribution is near completion.

Educational: The educational booklet is completed, and 1,000 copies are being printed. The selling price will be \$7.00 plus \$2.50 for shipping and handling. Profits from the sale of the booklet will cover the printing costs.

Environmental: No report.

Partners in Flight: Thompson reported that the state group has been formed. PIF meetings will be held at each I.O.U. meeting.

Field Trips: A field trip will be held 1 June 1997 at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge. The trip to Duluth was very successful, but the other trips held this year had poor attendance. The committee has decided to concentrate on out-of-state trips for the coming year. Members were asked for suggestions.

Spring Count: Pete Petersen reported the count was held 11 May 1997 and he would like all reports by 1 June.

Birdline: No report.

IOU Web Page: It was reported that additional server space may be needed. Ann

Johnson is investigating options.

Upcoming Meetings: The 1997 fall meeting will be held 19-21 September at the Io-Dis-E-Ca Camp near Iowa City. The 1998 spring meeting will be held in Ames and the 1998 fall meeting is tentatively scheduled for Des Moines.

### Old Business

Feeder Survey: I.O.U. has contracted for data entry and analysis of three years of data. The board will discuss a long range decision about the future of the feeder survey.

REAP Grant Proposal: I.O.U. has agreed to be the sponsoring organization and has pledged a \$2,000 cash match for a curriculum project called, "Birds of Two Worlds."

### New Business

Dues: It was moved (Hollis, seconded by Zaletel) to raise the dues for regular, first family, and institutions to \$20.00 per year. Motion carried. Other dues categories will remain unchanged.

Election of Officers: The following were elected to office: Mark Proescholdt, President; Ann Johnson, Vice-President; and Maridel Jackson, Curt Nelson, and Carol Thompson, Board of Directors.

Rare Bird Hosts: Thompson announced that the board has established a Rare Bird Host Award which consists of a one-year membership to I.O.U. and a certificate of appreciation. Members should send recommendations to the board for consideration.

### Announcements

Jim Dinsmore was recognized as Distinguished Iowa Scientist by the Iowa Academy of Science at their annual meeting.

Rick Hollis announced that The Nature Conservancy would like birders to survey a plot of land in southeastern Iowa being considered for purchase. Contact Rick if interested.

Outgoing officers and directors were thanked for their hard work.

Meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.



## BOOK REVIEW

**The Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas** by Laura Spess Jackson, Carol A. Thompson, James J. Dinsmore, Bruce L. Ehresman, John Fleckenstein, Robert Cecil, Lisa M. Hemesath, and Stephen J. Dinsmore. University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, 1996. 484 pp., hardbound, \$47.95, softbound, \$24.95. Probably more is known about birds than any other animal group except humans. Because most birds are diurnal and communicate by sight and sound, they are favorite subjects for both scientific study and recreation, and there are a myriad of popular and scientific publications around the world devoted to birds and bird study. Even those disciplines not specifically associated with ornithology often use birds for their studies. With this attention, one would suppose that distributions and population status of birds are well-known. To a certain extent, that is true, but precise information is lacking.

Ornithologists have traditionally relied on Breeding Bird Survey routes to determine population trends in breeding birds, but these are limited to birds that can be identified from a road. Breeding bird and winter bird surveys by environmental groups are also used, but these are often imprecise and lack randomness necessary for statistical comparisons.

Therefore, the Iowa breeding bird atlas project was a welcome endeavor to provide a base for monitoring environmental health, directing conservation efforts, and learning more about the ecology of Iowa birds. The resulting book provides these data and more.

I approached *The Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas* as another reference book on birds for my office shelf, but I quickly changed my opinion. The book is well-written, a pleasure to read, and it contains information and analyses not available elsewhere. At the same time, it is organized efficiently so it can be used as a reference for either quick information or to form the basis for more in-depth study.

The first five chapters (39 pages) are organized like a large scientific paper. However, I do not wish to scare people. The information is easily understood and, to me, is the most interesting part of the book. The authors are to be congratulated for both synthesizing important information and also making the material enjoyable to read.

Chapter 1, the Introduction, provides the rationale and history for the atlas project, and it also contains the Methods of how the state was divided and surveyed. Limitations and special allowances for the study are fully discussed. Some may find this boring, however, this information is essential if future generations are to interpret the data and to replicate the study, and this section underscores the careful planning and extensive efforts that made the project a success.

Chapter 2, Iowa's Physical Environment, presents a concise overview of the geologic and climatic history of Iowa with information about landforms and vegetational communities. Many Iowa readers will find nothing new, but such information is necessary for the greater audience that will read this book.

The Results are presented in Chapter 3. Normally, a relatively dry part of any scientific report, the results of the Iowa breeding bird atlas have been organized into a series of figures and tables that provide interesting and useful information. I found myself flipping between tables as I reviewed the data, and I probably spent more time in this section than any other because I enjoyed the synthesis of data.

The Results chapter is also engaging because it crosses over into what would be the Discussion section of a scientific paper by providing explanations and

interpretations of the data. The subchapter, Biological Crossroad, should be important to all Iowans interested in birds and natural history.

Factors Affecting Distribution, Chapter 4, also presents concise explanations of human impacts on birds and the ecosystem with a summary of notable changes to Iowa's avifauna since settlement. Again, this chapter should be of interest to all.

Chapter 5 is the bulk of the book, and it offers a two-page species account for each of Iowa's most common breeding birds. Each account is presented in the same format with the birds' common and scientific name (at least at the time of publication), a black-and-white photograph, identification characteristics of the species and studies that have been done in Iowa, the atlas data with a table, a map of Iowa that presents the atlas data, life history characteristics and behaviors, status of the bird in Iowa, and factors that affect the distribution of the species. Having all of this information in an easy-to-reference, concise format has been invaluable to me.

There are also shorter accounts for species that may nest in Iowa, formerly nested in Iowa, or nest in Iowa in small numbers (Chapter 6). In addition, the precise locations of the blocks are presented and there is a lengthy literature cited section and index.

The illustrations are crisp, most of the black-and-white photographs are sharp, and the cover painting by Larry Zach is marvelous. While there are minor style differences between the authors, they are not distracting. I have only one small, picky, personal negative criticism of the book, the use of "adapt." For a scientific book, I prefer to keep "adapt" and its various forms to refer to species-wide genetic changes. Several authors use "adapt" or "adaptability" in the common sense of ability of individuals to tolerate or adjust to non-preferred habitats, and, at least in the description of the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, the bird is said to have "developed" an effective nesting strategy rather than refer to this as an adaptation. However, this will not and should not detract from the valuable work that is presented or the care given to produce a useful text for both scientist, educated natural historian, bird enthusiast, and student.

People will question the overlap between this book and *Birds in Iowa* by Thomas H. Kent and James J. Dinsmore, also published in 1996. While there is some common information to the books, it is minor enough that I would recommend both books. However, we are fortunate to have two new studies of Iowa birds in the same year that, between them, give us both an enviably complete source of reference and great reading. Neil P. Bernstein, Department of Biology, Mount Mercy College, Cedar Rapids, IA. 52402



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The IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. *Iowa Bird Life* and *I.O.U. News* are quarterly publications of the Union.

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Institutions may subscribe to *Iowa Bird Life* for \$15 per year. Individuals may join the Iowa Ornithologists' Union according to the following membership classes: Regular (\$15); Regular as spouse or minor child of another Regular member without publications (\$4 first additional family member, \$2 each additional family member); Contributing (\$15 plus any additional tax-deductible contribution to the I.O.U.); and Life (\$300 as single payment or \$75 for each of four years). Members will also receive the quarterly *I.O.U. News* and are eligible to vote and hold office in the Union. Send subscriptions, membership payments, or address changes to Jim Scheib, 10 Longview Knoll, Iowa City, IA 52240

## INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other materials relating to birds and bird finding in Iowa should be sent to the editor. Accepted manuscripts will generally be published promptly, depending on space available, with the following absolute deadlines: 15 November for the Winter issue; 15 February for the Spring issue; 15 May for the Summer issue; and 15 July for the Fall issue. Most manuscripts will be refereed. All material should be typed double-spaced or hand printed in ink on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. Authors should pattern their style after a current issue of the journal. If you want more detailed guidelines or advice regarding the appropriateness of your topic for *Iowa Bird Life*, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the editor. Manuscripts may also be submitted on computer disk (Word 4.0 for Macintosh or compatible programs). Please submit one printed copy of the manuscript with the disk.

## OFFICERS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

Mark Proescholdt, President (1999), 1116 Muscatine Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240  
Ann Johnson, Vice-President (1999), 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, IA 50211  
Mary Kuhlman, Secretary (1998), 1300 N. 29th Street, Fort Dodge, IA 50501  
Jim Scheib, Treasurer (1998), 10 Longview Knoll, Iowa City, IA 52240  
Other members of the Board of Directors: Beth Brown (1998), Dan Dorrance (1998), Maridel Jackson (1999), Curt Nelson (1999), and Carol A. Thompson (1999).

## STANDING COMMITTEES

*Publications:* Harold White (chair), Ann M. Barker, Dan Dorrance, Jim Durbin, Ron Muilenburg  
*Records:* Thomas H. Kent (secretary), Chris Edwards, James L. Fuller, Ann Johnson, Matthew C. Kenne, Francis L. Moore, Ross Silcock.  
*Membership:* Beth Brown (chair), Jane Clark, Maridel Jackson, Curt Nelson, Jim Scheib.  
*Library/Historical:* Barb Bettis, Dennis Carter, Sue Speker, Jan Walters, Hank Zaletel.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS OF IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

15-17 May 1998, Ames

Fall 1998, Des Moines

## FIELD REPORTS

Anyone observing birds in Iowa is encouraged to report their findings on a quarterly basis to the Field Reports editors. Sample reporting and documentation forms suitable for duplication are available from the editor (send self-addressed stamped envelope to Jim Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50014). An article describing the reporting process is also available.

Deadlines for receipt of field reports are as follows:

- \*Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb)--3 March (Robert Cecil, 1315 41st St., Des Moines, IA 50311)
- \*Spring (Mar, Apr, May)--3 June (Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246)
- \*Summer (Jun, Jul)--3 August (James J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50014)
- \*Fall (Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov)--3 December (Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246)

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

- \*Deadline for receipt of reports: 15 January. For forms and instructions write: Stephen J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50014.

## IOWA BIRDLINE 319-338-9881

The birdline is a recorded summary of interesting recent bird sightings in Iowa. At the end of the report you can leave a message and report recent sightings. Be sure to give your name and phone number as well as the location of the bird and date seen. Call in as soon as possible after sighting a rare bird. Jim Fuller checks the reports daily and updates the recording on Monday, so make sure Sunday sightings are reported by Sunday night.

I.O.U. HOMEPAGE: <http://storm.simpson.edu/~birding/>

## I.O.U. NEWS

Send items of interest for the newsletter to the editors (J. Hank and Linda Zaletel, 1928 6th St., Nevada, IA 50201).

## MATERIALS AVAILABLE

The following materials may be obtained by writing the editorial office (Iowa Bird Life, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50014):

- \*Order form for back issues of *Iowa Bird Life*: send self-addressed stamped envelope.
- \*Field Checklist of Iowa Birds--1996 Edition: 25 for \$8.00, postpaid. Also available at annual meetings.

## REPORTING NEBRASKA BIRDS

Sightings of Nebraska birds, including those within the Nebraska portion of DeSoto N.W.R., should be reported to Loren and Babs Padelford, 1405 Little John Road, Bellevue, NE 68005. Formats for reporting and documentation are the same as for Iowa. The Nebraska Bird Line, available 24 hours a day, is 402-292-5325. Iowa birders are encouraged to report their Nebraska sightings to this number.

## ADDRESS CHANGES

Please send address changes/corrections to Jim Scheib, 10 Longview Knoll, Iowa City, IA 52240

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